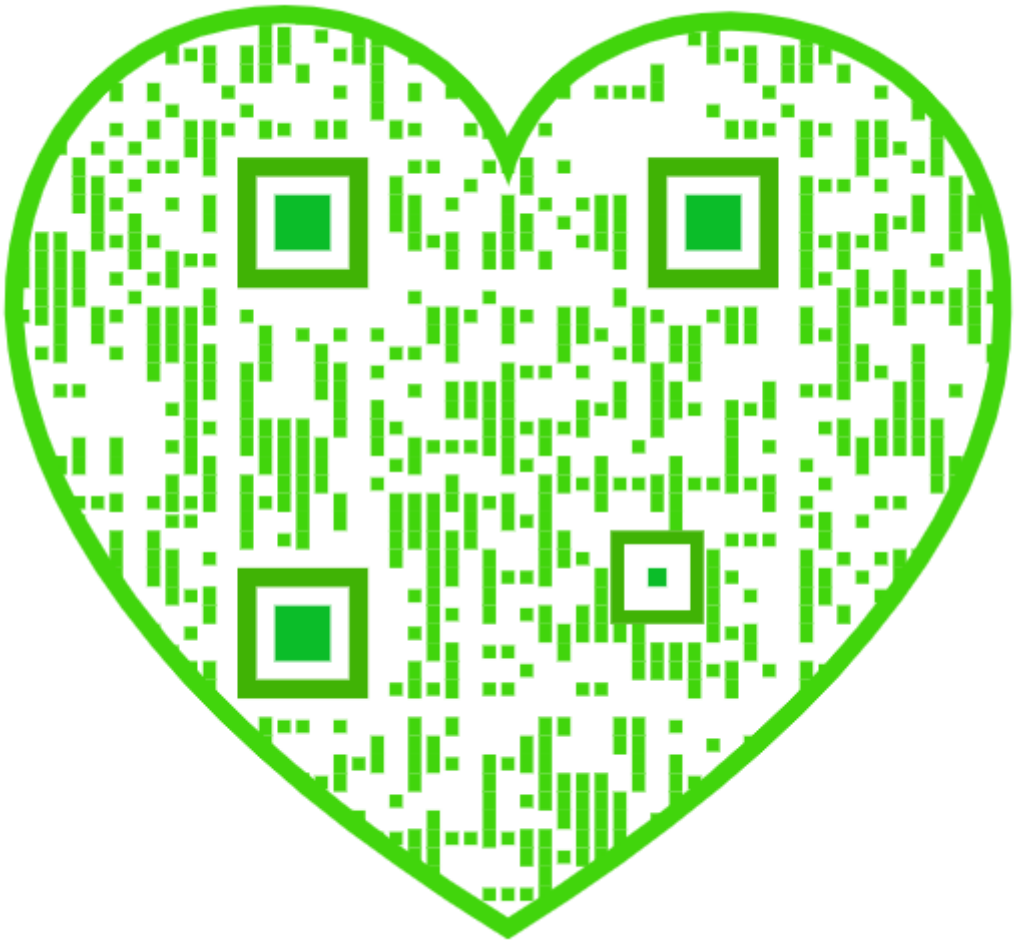
FRESCO PAINTING

ITS ART AND TECHNIQUE

BY

JAMES WARD

fornia
nal
y



FRESCO PAINTING

FRESCO PAINTING

ITS ART AND TECHNIQUE

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE BUONO AND SPIRIT FRESCO METHODS

BY

JAMES [illegible]

[illegible]

With Four Plates in Colour and Thirty-two Reproductions of Italian and other Fresco Paintings

LONDON
CHAPMAN AND HALL, Ltd.
1927

ITALY

THE VAULT OF LEVCE

Frontispiece.

THE ARTS OF PEACE.

Lord Leighton, Victoria and Albert Museum.

FRESCO PAINTING

ITS ART AND TECHNIQUE

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE BUONO AND SPIRIT FRESCO METHODS

BY

JAMES WARD

AUTHOR OF

"PRINCIPLES OF ORNAMENT," "COLOUR HARMONY AND CONTRAST,"
"HISTORIC ORNAMENT," "PROGRESSIVE DESIGN," ETC.

With Four Plates in Colour and Thirty-one Half-tone Illustrations of Italian and other Fresco Paintings

LONDON

CHAPMAN AND HALL, LTD.

1909

RICHARD CLAY & SONS, LIMITED,
BREAD STREET HILL, E.C., AND
BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.

SRLF
URL
OC 1136788

PREFACE

I HAVE endeavoured in this treatise to place before students some practical hints in the methods and processes of fresco painting, which are the outcome of my experience in the practice of the "buon-fresco," and the "spirit-fresco" systems of wall decoration. As to the stereochrome, or German "water-glass," and its later variety, the Keims process of fresco painting, I do not pretend to have a definite knowledge, having no practical experience in painting in these methods, but, on seeing the condition of some frescos in England which have been executed in stereochromy, I should prefer to trust to the buon-fresco or to the spirit-fresco mediums when it is a question of the permanency of wall paintings.

It is common enough to-day to hear and to read of the condemnation of fresco painting by critics, and even by some eminent artists, all of whom seem to echo each other in pointing out the failures in the examples executed on the walls of the Houses of Parliament and other places; and all agree, because of these failures, that fresco painting is impossible in this country, owing to the dampness of the

climate. Our damp climate seems to have a deal to answer for, but it is hardly fair to blame it for the ignorance of some of our mid-Victorian artists as to the nature and behaviour of the materials used in fresco painting, and for their possibly limited knowledge of the chemistry of colours and the after action of caustic lime on the colours they used.

I trust that the technical notes and observations on some of the Italian frescos may be of interest and of some value to students of decorative art.

J. Ward.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

PAGE

THE RELATIONSHIP OF MURAL PAINTING TO ARCHITECTURE 1

CHAPTER II

MURAL DECORATION—SYSTEMS AND METHODS . . . 8

CHAPTER III

FRESCO-BUONO PROCESS—COLOURS—PREPARATION OF THE WALL—METHOD OF EXECUTION 12

CHAPTER IV

PAINTING OF FLESH AND DRAPERIES—PERMANENCE OF BUON-FRESCO 25

CHAPTER V

SPIRIT FRESCO PAINTING 31

CHAPTER VI

TECHNICAL NOTES ON THE COMPOSITION, COLOUR, AND PRESENT STATE OF SOME ITALIAN FRESCOS . . . 39

CHAPTER VII

FRESCO PAINTINGS BY GOZZOLI AND PERUGINO . . . 51

CHAPTER VIII

PAGE

THE WORK OF PINTURICCHIO AND GHIRLANDAJO . . 56

CHAPTER IX

FRESCOS BY ANDREA DEL SARTO, LUINI, G. FERRARI, RAFFAELLE AND MICHAEL ANGELO 63

INDEX 71

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PLATE		*To face page*
1.	The Arts of Peace (colour). *Lord Leighton*	*Frontispiece*
2.	Fragment of Ancient Fresco from Tiryns	10
3.	Portion of Fresco Border (colour). *After Sir E. J. Poynter, P.R.A.*	20
4.	Trial Piece of Buon Fresco. *G. F. Watts, R.A*	23
5.	Trial Piece of Buon Fresco. *G. F. Watts, R.A.*	25
6.	Group of Three Figures (colour). *G. F. Watts, R.A.*	27
7.	St. Stephen before his Accusers, and the Stoning of St. Stephen. *Sir E. J. Poynter, P.R.A.*	30
8.	Detail from the Arts of War. *Lord Leighton*	32
9.	Detail from the Arts of War. *Lord Leighton*	34
10.	Detail from the Arts of Peace. *Lord Leighton*	37
11.	The Birth of the Virgin. *Giotto*	39
12.	The Death of St. Francis. *Giotto*	40
13.	St. Louis, King of France. *Giotto*	42
14.	The Meeting of SS. Joachim and Anna. *Giotto*	43
15.	Christ appearing to Mary Magdalene. *Fra Angelico*	44
16.	The Deposition in the Sepulchre. *Fra Angelico*	46
17.	Detail of the Crucifixion. *Fra Angelico*	47
18.	The Tribute Money (colour). *Masaccio*	49
19.	Angels, from the Paradise. *B. Gozzoli*	51
20.	Angels, from the Paradise. *B. Gozzoli*	53
21.	St. Benedict. *Perugino*	54
22.	St. John. *Perugino*	55
23.	Detail from the Christ's Charge to Peter. *Perugino*	56

PLATE *To face page*

24. St. Catherine disputing before Maximianus. *Pinturicchio* 57
25. Detail of the St. Catherine Fresco. *Pinturicchio* 58
26. The Nativity, Spello Cathedral. *Pinturicchio* . 59
27. Florentine Lady. *Ghirlandajo* 60
28. The Death of St. Francis. *Ghirlandajo* . . 61
29. Florentine Lady. *Ghirlandajo* 62
30. Detail from the Birth of the Virgin. *Ghirlandajo* 63
31. Fresco of an Infant Angel. *B. Luini* . . . 64
32. The Virgin and Child. *B. Luini* 65
33. St. Lucy sentenced to Death. *Jacopo d'Avanzo* . 66
34. The Fire in the Borgo. *Raffaelle* 68
35. Figure of Adam, Sistine Chapel. *Michael Angelo* . 69

FRESCO PAINTING

CHAPTER I

THE RELATIONSHIP OF MURAL PAINTING TO ARCHITECTURE

When considering the subject of mural painting, and indeed the progress and development of art generally, of the so-called "fine arts," or of the lesser arts that minister to the uses and wants of everyday life, we cannot regard them as isolated creations of human activity apart from their legitimate connection with the laws and principles of good architecture. The progress, development, culmination, and decadence of architecture synchronize with the similar stages of painting and sculpture.

In a noble building the special functions of the three sister arts are clearly defined; each supplies its own distinct qualities of expression to make up the general artistic unity. The severe lines and proportional rhythm of the architecture are enriched by sculpture, which in its turn is chastened and modified by the contiguous severity of the former,

while painting adds the necessary colour finish to the bare spaces that are enclosed by the mouldings and constructional lines of the architecture, borrowing at the same time much of its dignity, restfulness of form, simplicity of composition, and whatever else that adds to its nobility and monumental fitness, from its close association with the architecture. Thus, while the three arts are each limited to their own special functions, they, at the same time, would appear to assimilate from each other what is lacking in themselves, and so contribute to the complete artistic harmony.

Painting, as the most ornate of the three, owing to its greater power of expression and beauty of colour, must nevertheless be employed to *decorate*, in the true sense of the word, the plain spaces in a building, and in the largest and simplest manner, without any definite attempts to represent the true facts of nature, or at least it should be suggestive of such facts rather than descriptive of them.

The arrangement and composition of line, restfulness of the masses of form, and the harmonic balance and purity of colour are among the primary essentials of mural painting, and all these indispensable requisites of this form of art are due to its contact with architecture. While bearing this in mind, we must not forget that painting has its special functions apart from those of architecture, which include a controlling power over form and colour, and the faculty of illustrating ideas, by means

of the representation of a theme or an incident, a subject or a story.

Now if the essentials of monumental painting, which we have named, and the special functions of the art of the painter are united in any scheme of mural decoration, the result would be an ideal work of decorative art, examples of which may be found in the frescos of Giotto, and in those of the majority of the Italian painters who followed him, down to the sublime creations of Michael Angelo.

The older art of the Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Mediæval schools was, in each case, influenced by, and in perfect harmony with the architecture of the respective periods, and not less, but even more so, were the painting and sculpture of Italy from the middle of the thirteenth century till the end of the sixteenth century. The Byzantine and Romanesque mosaics which decorate the churches of Ravenna, Venice and Rome are dignified and sculpturesque in treatment, and from an ornamental point of view, admirably *fill* the architectural spaces of both walls and vaulted ceilings. The artists of these ancient schools rightly treated the wall spaces as flat surfaces, the wall being strictly considered as such, and no attempt was made to treat the subject of the painting in pictorial perspective, or to give the wall the illusion of a window. The subject or incident, was also, for the most part, mystic in character, and elevated in a spiritual sense, so that the very soul of their art

was expressed and symbolized; while what we may call the bodily part, either from a want of their power of expressing it or from a careless or studied neglect of this side of their art, was limited and incomplete. And even when, in later times, the science of art, as expressed in anatomy and perspective, was well understood, this traditional treatment of the design was followed out by the Italian artists, both in their mosaics and wall paintings, and was never lost sight of by the painters subsequent to Giotto, until the seventeenth century, when the general decadence of art had set in.

The three absolute essentials of ancient and mediæval painting, which also characterized the best work of the Renaissance, appear to have been a striving after the symbolic expression of the spirit of the subject, a restfulness and dignity of form, and the beauty of colour. Whatever else we look for, we ought to find these three essentials in a successful work of monumental painting. In this kind of art, and indeed in all art, small things should be sacrificed to great, and the commonplace or matter-of-fact to the rendering or expression of the idea; in parentheses, it might be pointed out, that in a general sense the tendency of the art of the present day is towards a greater dexterity of handling closer representations of the facts of nature, but less sincerity of aim.

The more important paintings of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were those which decorated

the walls of the Italian churches and palaces, and the authors of these works were not only painters, but the majority of them were also architects, sculptors, and craftsmen in gold and silver work. Even those who confined their attention chiefly to painting, thoroughly understood the principles of architecture, and often designed and carried out architectural work, as witness Giotto, Ghirlandajo, Michael Angelo, Leonardo Da Vinci, and many others.

If we now consider another aspect of art, where it is applied to objects of general utility, we shall find that the design and decoration of such, when rightly understood, are in each case subject to the laws that govern good architecture. Take, for instance, the form or shape of a common candlestick, a vase in pottery or in metal, a cabinet or a chair, and let us see how far we can apply the principles of architecture to their design and decoration. When designing such objects the first consideration is their utility, and the next is the material of which they are made. It is a common enough truism to say that the forms and proportions which may be suitable for objects made in a certain material, such as pottery or glass for example, should not be imitated in another, such as metal or woodwork. When the questions of utility and material have been settled, we can apply the laws and principles of architecture to guide us in the design and decoration of the given object. As to design, first, we should strive to obtain good proportion of the parts and divisions to each other,

and to the whole. It will be found that correct proportion generally postulates the determination of beautiful outlines and shapes. We should also aim for the expression of contrasting elements of forms, such as curves with straight lines, sharp curves with others of less curvature, horizontal lines to counteract vertical tendencies, or mouldings and lines of varying widths arranged to fit in such positions that will give, or suggest, constructive strength ; all of which are simply architectural principles, which, if applied to the design of common objects, would give them a definite claim to be considered as works of art.

Very little decoration is required on any article or object which has been designed on correct architectural principles, beyond that already expressed by the lines or mouldings and space divisions. If, however, the nature or use of the object permits of the display, or adventitious aid of such, in order to heighten its beauty, by making it still more attractive and comely to the eye, then the laws and principles of architecture will again help us by indicating where the decoration may be placed, the right amount to use, the scale of such, and the order of its disposition. We learn, for instance, from architecture that we must not weaken the appearance of the constructive parts, such as the lines, or the mouldings, by any fretful ornamentation, but on the panels and plain spaces we may legitimately place our decoration, yet still restrained so far as not to interfere with the right uses of the object, and designed so as to harmonize,

and in some instances contrast, with the lines and contour. Examples of artistic objects, designed on architectural principles, may be found in the Greek and Etruscan vases and Pompeian bronzes, and, on the other hand, if some examples may be mentioned where the laws of architecture do not find expression in their form or decoration, and where art is almost non-existing, we might safely point out the meretricious creations of the Chelsea and Dresden chinaware, and the gold and silversmiths' work of the mid-Victorian period. This digression from our subject may be justified, on the grounds of showing how important the study of architecture is to the painter, the decorative artist, and to the designer in any branch of art.

CHAPTER II

MURAL DECORATION—SYSTEMS AND METHODS

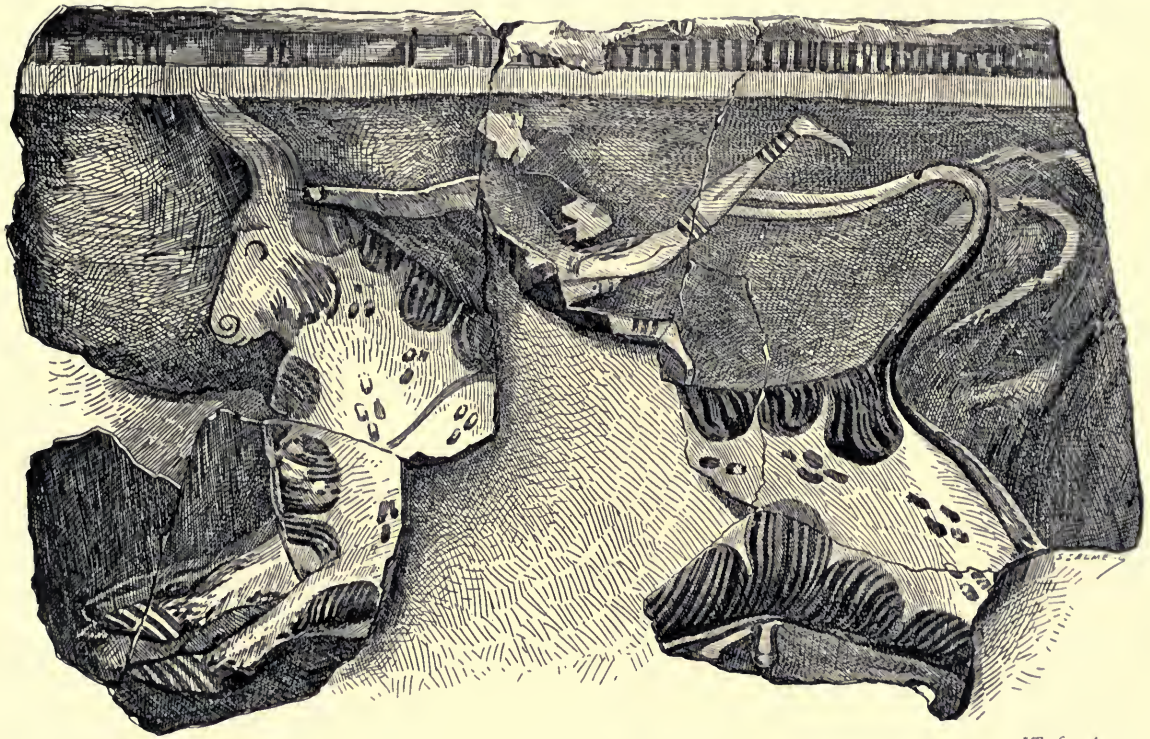
VARIOUS processes, systems, or methods have been employed in ancient and modern times in the colour decoration of walls and ceilings. Under this section of art is included all kinds of wall paintings, from the representation of the symbolic hieroglyphics, found in the Egyptian tombs, to the monumental paintings on the walls of public buildings, churches, and palaces. The decoration of wall surfaces in colour is one of the very oldest forms of art, and to a wall painting of any kind the term "fresco" has usually, but somewhat loosely, been applied. Strictly speaking, however, a veritable fresco painting is one that is executed on the fresh or wet lime plaster of the wall, and is not re-touched after the plaster has become dry. All other varieties of so-called "fresco" paintings can only be designated as wall paintings, and qualified according to their kind, such as "fresco-secco," or "dry" fresco, a kind of fresco where the wall is prepared in the same way as in true fresco, and is then allowed to dry. Before the painting is commenced, the wall is well saturated with lime water, and the colours used

are the same as those employed in fresco painting. It is not so permanent as work executed on the fresh, wet plaster. Some of the old writers frequently use the term "secco" when tempera painting is evidently meant. Painting in *tempera* on the dry wall is a process in which the colours are tempered with a binding medium, such as glue size, gum, parchment size, or a size made from eggs beaten up with water; the Italian painters added the juice, or gum, of the fig tree, and sometimes vinegar to the egg size. Other methods are *encaustic*, or painting with wax as a medium, heat being afterwards applied to the wall to blend or to protect the colours; *spirit fresco*, in which the colours are ground in a wax medium and thinned with spirits of turpentine or oil of spike; *water-glass*, a German method of wall painting; Keim's process, an improved variety of water-glass, and wall painting in oil colours.

The only advantage that these varieties of wall painting seem to possess over the *buon*, or true fresco, process—and it may be considered as a questionable one—is, that as regards the number of the colours, the artist may use an almost unlimited or unrestricted palette, while in buon fresco his colours are limited to the very few which remain unchanged when subjected to the caustic action of the lime in the plaster. Tempera painting on walls has been so much mistaken for the fresco process that it is impossible to say when the latter was first practised, but according to the statements of

Vitruvius and Pliny, the process was well understood by the Greeks and Romans. Perhaps one of the most interesting revelations in the history of the art has been brought about by the discovery of several fragments of wall and ceiling decorations, found recently by the late Dr. Schliemann during the excavations of the ancient cities and palaces of the pre-Hellenic Mycene and Tiryns, of primitive Greece. One of these fragments of fresco painting, which was found in a palace at Tiryns, consisted of a portion of a wall or ceiling, a stucco slab, composed of lime and sand plaster, on which is painted the representation of a spirited bull with the figure of a man vaulting over its back. This interesting piece of work must have been executed at least as early as 1500 B.C., as the city of Tiryns was a mass of ruins shortly after this date. Many other fragments of fresco paintings have also been found in the ruins of these ancient palaces, some of which were decorated with linear and geometric ornament, conventional flowers, and animal forms. Not only were the walls and ceilings decorated with frescos, but the floors of some of the apartments were treated in a similar manner. Still earlier examples of fresco painting have been found in prehistoric Thera, one of the Grecian isles, and others in the Minoan palace at Cnossus, in Crete, both of which may have been painted as early as the nineteenth century B.C., and certainly not later than the eighteenth.

The wall paintings of the Egyptian tombs were



[*To face p.* 12

PLATE 2.—FRAGMENT OF ANCIENT FRESCO FROM TIRYNS

executed in tempera on a gesso or stucco white ground, the same method being followed in the decoration of the mummy cases and other objects. In some instances these tempera paintings of the Egyptians were varnished, which was not an advantage to their appearance, as the varnish darkened, and in a great measure destroyed, the beauty of the original colours.

Some of the wall paintings found at Pompeii are said to have been executed in veritable fresco, since lime has been found in mixture with most of the colours used. On the other hand, this has been disputed, and some authorities classify them as tempera or secco paintings; but perhaps the truth of the matter is, that a certain amount of the first colouring was really executed on the wet lime plaster, and that, in some instances, certain colours, used in the finishing of the work, were applied afterwards in a tempera medium when the wall surface had become quite dry. This method of procedure, according to the statements of Vasari and Cennini, was not an uncommon practice with the Italian *frescanti* of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

CHAPTER III

FRESCO-BUONO PROCESS—COLOURS—PREPARATION OF THE WALL—METHOD OF EXECUTION

FRESCO-BUONO, or true fresco, is so called because the painting is executed "a fresco," that is, directly on the fresh, or wet plaster, which forms the painting surface of the wall. This plaster, or mortar, is a mixture of lime and sand, and the colours used in the painting are such as will remain unchanged in hue when in contact or in mixture with the lime. When all necessary details relating to the method of procedure connected with the work are carefully carried out, true fresco paintings may be said to have a higher degree of permanence and durability than those executed by any other method or medium. The fine surface texture and luminous quality of buon fresco pre-eminently distinguishes it as the most beautiful colour finish for mural decoration.

The great permanence of fresco paintings is due to the formation of carbonates, and sometimes silicates, of lime on the surface of the plaster, which takes place during the drying of the latter. The

carbonic acid contained in the natural limestone is driven out of it by the process of burning in the kiln, and after the burnt lime has been slaked into lime "putty," it has then become what is known as a hydrate of lime. As long as the plaster is wet on the wall the lime in the plaster exists in the state of a hydrate, and the applied colours of the painting become saturated with this form of lime ; but during the process of drying, the lime on the surface, and to a slight depth below the surface of the plaster, rapidly absorbs carbonic acid gas from the atmosphere, and becomes a carbonate of lime, which is formed as a hard and crystalline skin, or surface covering, under which the colours are locked up, and so protected from any atmospheric influences. In addition to this carbonate surface a silicate of lime is sometimes formed, especially when in the painting some of the more earthy colours are used which may have silica in their composition. These thin coverings of carbonates and silicates of lime render fresco paintings impervious to wet or damp on the surface, so that they may be occasionally washed without injury ; but bad air, such as sulphuretted hydrogen gases, or the sulphur products given off by gas and coal combustion, will in time convert the carbonate covering into a sulphate of lime, a substance which disintegrates and destroys, not only the colours, but the plaster surface also. This would suggest that in buildings which contain fresco paintings coal fires and gas should not be used for

heating and lighting purposes, and also that the buildings should be properly ventilated.

PREPARATION OF THE WALL IN BUON-FRESCO:

The wall on which a work in buon-fresco is to be painted should be of good brick, or if a stone wall, it should be lined with brick on its inner face, or, better still, it should be what is known as a hollow brick wall—that is, one having an air-space between the outer and inner linings. The joints between the bricks should be scored out, so as to leave a key for the first coating of rough plaster; this should consist of old lime and coarse, gritty, well-washed river sand, mixed with ox-hair, or white asbestos cut into small bits, so as to bind the mixture more effectually. For this first coating of plaster the usual proportions are one part of lime and two parts of the gritty sand; it should be about three-quarters of an inch in thickness. This coating should have a roughened surface, made by scratching it with a coarse-toothed kind of wooden comb, and should be left for the best part of a year, so that it may thoroughly harden, before it receives the second, and last, coat of plaster, that on which the painting is to be executed, which is known as the *intonaco*. This plaster mixture must be prepared with great care, and more than sufficient to cover the whole wall space should be made before beginning the painting, so as to get the whole surface evenly tempered, and of the same mixture;

for if different mixtures were made, and at different times, the lime and sand might vary in proportions, which would possibly affect the colours of the painting, and prevent them drying uniformly, as to tint or tone.

The proportions of lime and sand for the intonaco is, one part of lime and three parts of fine and well-washed river sand. Pit sand must not be used, on account of the clay and earthy matter which it contains; nor sea sand, which of course contains a certain amount of salt that would attract damp and cause the lime to perish. The lime must be well slaked, and must be fairly old in the "putty" state, so that there may be no fear of its blistering and blowing off here and there in round flakes on the finished surface, which it will do if it is too new or not properly slaked, even six or eight months after the plaster has been spread on the wall.

The method of preparing lime for fresco work is, first to select the best white variety which has been properly calcined. The lime is put into a large wooden trough with sufficient clean water to slake and dissolve it into a thin creamy consistency. The mixture is then strained through a fine sieve into a brick-lined pit, roofed over to keep out the wet and dust. A thick coating of clean river sand should be put over the lime when it has cooled down and thickened into a paste, and has become what is known as "lime putty."

There are many tales and legends concerning the

extreme old age of lime putty before it has been used in the plaster of wall surfaces, or as a painting material in fresco.

It has been stated that for some of the Italian frescos the lime used was eighty years old. As a matter of fact it is quite ripe for use about one year after it has been slaked. The lime used by Sir Edward J. Poynter in his fresco in St. Stephen's Church at Dulwich was about two years old, and that used in the Houses of Parliament frescos was three years. The quality of the lime, however, is of more consequence than its age. The common grey lime used by the London builders should be avoided; the best English variety is the pure white limestone, which is quarried and burnt near Buxton in Derbyshire.

Before describing the method of laying on the last plaster ground, or intonaco, a few words must be said about the preparation of the design or subject to be painted. A finished coloured drawing or painting of the design, to a smaller, or even to the same scale as the fresco painting, must be prepared, and the artist should endeavour to make an exact copy of this on the plaster surface, as there is no time to experiment in colour schemes, or to make alterations from the original coloured design in the short period that is at the disposal of the painter when he is at work on the wet plaster. If the colour sketch of the work is prepared on a small scale it will be also necessary that a cartoon

in light and shade drawing should be made to the full scale of the fresco painting, before beginning to paint on the wall.

As the colours, and everything else that may be required, must be in readiness, and close at hand before laying on the plaster ground and before commencing the painting, it will be as well to indicate here the proper colours which may be safely used on the lime plaster.

Although the palette in buon-fresco painting is very simple and restricted as to the number of the colours which may be trusted to withstand the caustic action of the lime, at the same time a fairly rich and luminous colour scheme may be obtained, notwithstanding the limited range of the palette. The following list may be safely relied upon :—

WHITE . Lime white (*hydrate of lime*).
YELLOW . Raw sienna (*a ferruginous earth*).
„ . Cadmium yellow (*cadmium sulphide*).
RED . Vermilion (*sulphide of mercury*).
„ . Light red (*calcined Oxford ochre*).
„ . Indian red (*ferric peroxide*).
BLUE . Cobalt blue (*phosphate of cobalt and alumina*).
GREEN . Oxide of chromium (*anhydrous sesquioxide of chromium*).
„ . Emerald oxide of chromium (*hydrated oxide of chromium and borax*).
„ . Cobalt green (*oxides of cobalt and zinc*).
ORANGE . Burnt sienna (*raw sienna calcined*).

BROWN . Raw umber (*oxides of iron, manganese, and clay*).

,, . Burnt umber (*raw umber calcined*).

BLACK . Ivory black (*charred bones*).

There are other pigments that might be used, but are really not necessary, and some of them are doubtful as to their permanence. One colour, not in our list, is the genuine ultramarine, a splendid blue, and thoroughly permanent in buon-fresco, but its great price prohibits its use, except in very small quantities, or on small portions of the work. French, or factitious, ultramarine is also very permanent, and withstands the action of the lime, but at the same time it is a most harsh and disagreeable colour when used in lime or in any other kind of fresco; when used alone it destroys by its intensity of hue the proper values of other colours in the scheme; on the other hand, if any attempt is made to tone it down by mixing it with another pigment, or by glazing another colour over it, the result is cold and muddy in the extreme, so it is best left out of the list, as it is almost unmanageable in fresco. Vermilion is rendered durable in fresco by pouring lime-water over the powdered colour, and then draining this water off, without disturbing the colour. This washing is repeated four or five times, before the vermilion is ready for use. Permanent white, which is a barium sulphate, and tin white, or tin binoxide, may both be used in lime frescoes, but they are unnecessary, and not so good for the purpose as

lime white. Lemon yellow, Naples yellow, aureolin Venetian red, and terre-verte may be used with lime, but it all depends on the manufacture of these colours as to whether or not they may be used with safety. For example, the Naples yellow, Venetian red, and terre-verte pigments of to-day are quite different in their chemical constituents to the same named colours of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Yellow ochre, though it has been used very much by the old Italian frescanti, is not to be depended upon when used in lime fresco in this country, as it consists of a mixture or combination of hydrate of iron and clay; it therefore attracts the damp that is nearly always present in our atmosphere. Of course, it can be safely used in very dry climates, but it may be mentioned that it has been one of the pigments which has largely perished in some of the frescos of the Houses of Parliament. Another objection to its use in fresco is, that the caustic nature of the lime is apt to change yellow ochre to a light red, an after effect which may not be altogether desirable. Raw sienna, however, more than takes the place of yellow ochre, and is one of the most useful colours in fresco painting. We should say that the three most permanent and beautiful colours for use on the lime plaster are raw sienna, burnt umber, and Indian red, and whether used in transparent washes or in solid tints, as when mixed with lime-white, or in the full strength of their hues, they always dry out luminous and brilliant. All the

colours should be ground very finely in water, and kept in covered jars or wide-mouthed glass bottles. The lime-white should be strained through muslin and kept covered. A bone or ivory palette knife must be used, and the palette should be made of tinned metal, having a series of small circular wells to hold the various colours. Brushes are of the ordinary kind, hog-hair, and a few long sable riggers. Hog-hair brushes are best for use when they are of a flat shape, but of a roundish finish at the end, like an old or half-worn brush, so that when in use they will not disturb the surface of the wet plaster, which a new or square-ended brush is apt to do.

When everything is in readiness to commence work, a portion of the rough wall surface should be thoroughly saturated with water, and the plaster ground, or intonaco, should be laid on with a wooden trowel, beginning at the top and at an angle of the wall, and large enough in area to constitute a day's work, or, rather, as much as can be done in about five hours; for after that time it is not safe to work on the new plaster, as it then becomes too dry: if allowed to get in this condition the colours will not properly incorporate with the body of the plaster, for if any painting is done when the plaster is in a half-dry state the colours will not adhere permanently to the wall, but will scale off the surface, or may be brushed off loosely when dry. When any portion of the plaster ground becomes too dry to work upon,

To face page 20.

PLATE 3.

Photo, Bolas.

PORTION OF FRESCO BORDER ON SOFFIT OF ARCH, VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, SOUTH KENSINGTON.

After the design by Sir E. J. Poynter, P.R.A.

To face page 20.

colours should be ground very finely in water and kept in covered jars or wide-mouthed glass bottles. The lime-white should be strained through muslin and kept covered. A bone or ivory palette knife must be used, and the palette should be made of tinned metal, having a series of small circular wells to hold the various colours. Brushes are of the ordinary kind, hog-hair, and a few long sable riggers. Hog-hair brushes are best for use when they are of a flat shape, but of a roundish finish at the end, like an old or half-worn brush, so that when in use they will not disturb the surface of the wet plaster, which a new or square-ended brush is apt to do.

When everything is in readiness to commence work, a portion of the rough wall surface should be thoroughly saturated with water, and the plaster ground, or intonaco, should be laid on with a worn trowel, beginning at the top and at an angle of the wall, and large enough in area to constitute a day's work, or, rather, as much as can be done in about five hours; for after that time it is not safe to work on the new plaster, as it then becomes too dry: if allowed to get in this condition the colours will not properly incorporate with the body of the plaster, for if any painting is done when the plaster is in a half-dry state the colours will not adhere permanently to the wall, but will scale off the surface, or may be brushed off loosely when dry. When any portion of the plaster ground becomes ready to work upon,

Photo. Bolas.

PORTION OF FRESCO BORDER ON SOFFIT OF ARCH,
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, SOUTH KENSINGTON.
After the design by Sir E. J. Poynter, P.R.A.

it must be cut right away and a new coating of plaster applied; it is of no avail to syringe it with water in order to keep it damp for painting on, as the water only weakens the nature of the lime in the plaster. The chemical action between the atmosphere and the lime, necessary for the firm locking up of the colours, will have taken place after four or five hours' time, according to condition of the atmosphere; and this action will not repeat itself or be brought about by any application of water after the period named.

When the day's work is finished, any part of the surface not painted on must be cut away, and the plaster all around the edge must be under-cut, the cut sloping well inwards, so as to form a key for the new piece of plaster for the next day's work. This coating of plaster should be rather more than half-an-inch in thickness, and should be finished to a level, but not too smooth, a surface, with the wooden trowel, or "float." An iron trowel must not be used. After the plaster is laid on it should remain about ten minutes or so before painting, so as to allow it to set. It should then be coated with a tint, that would be a deep vellum colour when dry, made of a mixture of lime-white and a little raw sienna, about the thickness of cream; this will give a slightly smoother surface to the plaster and will act as a luminous ground for the subsequent colouring, besides acting a very important part as an under-coating on which the superimposed colours

will "bear out" more effectively. The water used should be distilled or boiled, or rain water collected in clean vessels, as hard water generally contains a quantity of chalk, and for this reason it is not so powerful a solvent of the lime as soft or distilled water.

The portion of the design selected for the day's painting is traced from the cartoon, and is transferred to the soft plaster through the holes, which are pricked through the tracing paper, by means of pouncing with powdered charcoal contained in a muslin bag, or it may have the outline traced through with a sharp-pointed wooden stile; this will leave a slightly depressed line on the soft plaster, and is a cleaner method than the charcoal pounce, and on the whole the more preferable one.

We have now arrived at the stage of the work when the painting may be proceeded with. It may be here mentioned that, in order to try the hues of the colours and various tints, an ordinary brick having a thick coating of plaster of Paris, that has been allowed to become thoroughly dry, should be at hand. If a touch from the brush, dipped in any tint, be put on this plastered brick it will dry immediately, and show at once the actual shade of colour that such a tint will be when, after some days, it has dried out on the plaster surface. It generally takes three or four days, according to the season of the year, or heat of the room, before the wall surface and the applied colours finally dry out, and all

[*To face p.* 23.

PLATE 4.—TRIAL PIECE OF FRESCO PAINTING

G. F. Watts, R.A., Victoria and Albert Museum

colours, more particularly the lighter tints and half-tones, dry eventually ever so much lighter than they appear when first laid on. It is only the very darkest tones, or pigments used in their full strength, those that have no lime mixed with them, that dry anything near the full strength of their wet state, and then there are exceptions to this; so it follows that in buon-fresco painting the artist must paint in a much darker key than the work is intended to appear when it has dried out.

As regards the method of execution in painting it may be urged that the artist will work according to his own feeling or temperament: for example, some may decide to paint in thin transparent washes or glazings, as in water-colour painting; others may prefer to use the colours in a thick impasto method, as in oil painting. Either method may be adopted with success, but we should say that a judicious mixture of both methods, in the same work, will obtain the clearest and most luminous results, for, as a matter of technique, fresco lends itself admirably to either methods of painting. The general rule is to model the shades, half-tones and lights, broadly at first and in the order named, with brushes rather large than small, and then to finish off by strengthening the shadows with lesser touches, or by a series of delicately hatched lines, and brightening the lights in the same way, using for these purposes sable rigger brushes. The reason for this is that every touch tells, especially

when using a sable brush ; you cannot press or lean on your brush on the soft plaster without disturbing the underneath colours, and possibly destroying the surface of the plaster as well. It will be seen from this that the fresco painter must cultivate a light hand for his work ; he cannot indulge, for instance, in that dexterity of handling that may be accomplished in oil or in, say, spirit-fresco painting, simply because of the danger of working up the soft and wet plaster ground : he must know what he has to do, and must do it frankly and at once ; for, although to a certain extent the artist may be able to paint over parts and so correct occasional mistakes, it is not advisable to do so, as the corrections will more or less show when the work has dried out, by looking muddy, and consequently less luminous than they ought to be. The only alternative, when a correction is necessary, is to cut the piece out, and lay on a fresh plaster ground. All this shows how important it is to have a full-sized cartoon in light and shade, and also a colour scheme previously prepared, from which the fresco painting may be almost copied directly on to the wet plaster.

[*To face p.* 25.

PLATE 5.—TRIAL PIECE OF FRESCO PAINTING

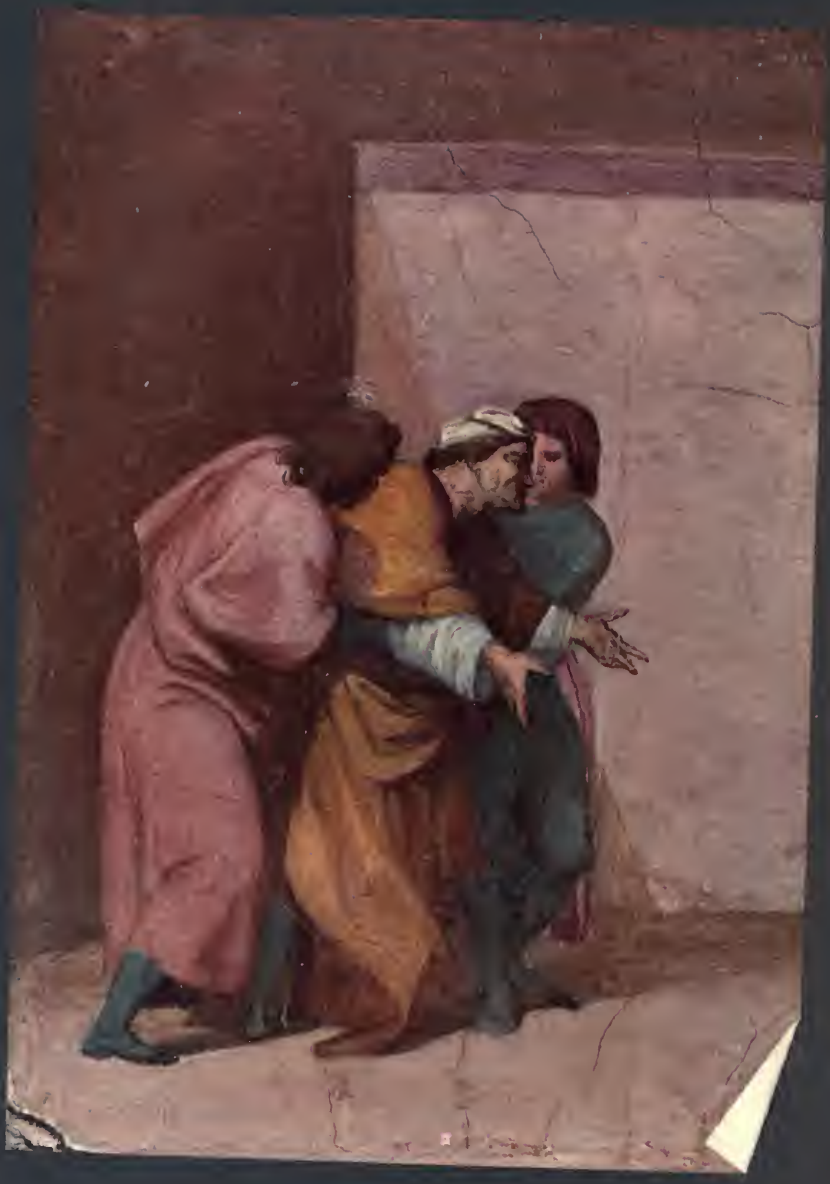
G. F. Watts, R.A., Victoria and Albert Museum

CHAPTER IV

PAINTING OF FLESH AND DRAPERIES—PERMANENCE OF BUON-FRESCO

In beginning the painting of flesh and draperies on the wet plaster, or indeed in any other kind of wall painting, it is important to commence with a kind of modified outline. This, of course, applies also to any other prominent objects in the design or composition. It is therefore advisable that, before laying in the first masses of colours, the main features of the drawing should be outlined firmly with a sable brush, even if you modify or half-obliterate the outline when afterwards painting within it. Having outlined the portion selected for painting on the prepared light or cream-coloured ground, supposing it to be a head or other part of the human figure, a very good way to begin is to lay in the shadows first, using a soft or half-worn hog-hair brush, the shadow colour to be of a warm greenish tint, of a mixture of emerald oxide of chromium, raw sienna, and light red, used thinly to get transparency. Immediately after the shading, or modelling of the shadows, is accomplished a

general flesh-coloured tint is made, of a medium tone, and is swiftly brushed over the parts where the lights and half-tones would be, taking care that it is worked very thinly or sparingly into the shadows. This flesh-coloured tint ought to have a very little quantity of lime-white to render it semi-opaque. As soon as this is done the carnations of the cheeks and lips and colours of the eyes should be painted in. Then on the top of the general flesh tint the colours of the forehead, cheeks, and neck should be worked in, according to the colour of the sketch, gradually brightening the lighter parts and strengthening the shadows as required. For this second painting of the flesh the shade colour, modified of course according to the complexion and position it is to occupy, may be made of a mixture of raw sienna, light red, burnt sienna, and a very little emerald oxide. The same colours, with vermilion and lime-white added, may be used for lights and half-tones, and the transition tones between lights and half-tones may be obtained by lightly dragging the lighter tints over the half-tones, which operation usually produces the natural greyness required in these parts. For the darker markings of the nostrils, lips, eyes, and eyebrows, or any dark accentuations of the flesh tints, burnt umber used alone or mixed with a little vermilion, or burnt sienna, may be employed. Black may also be used for the same purpose if mixed with burnt sienna or vermilion. At this stage the flesh-coloured



To face page 57.

of the work may be left to dry, and then with an almost flat wash of a grey-blue colour, and the lights and shades modelled into it. On coming back to the fresh portions it may be found necessary to do a considerable amount of retouching; this can still be done near the end of the day's work as long as the touches are kept quiet, and should there be any question of retouching a word of warning is necessary; and that is, it often happens that those touches which are intended to dry out lighter than when they are freshly laid on; this generally happens when the colour which is being used contains some

GROUP OF THREE FIGURES BY G. F. WATTS, R.A.

Trial Piece of Buon Fresco, Victoria and Albert Museum.

To face page 27.

GROUP OF THREE FIGURES BY G. F. WATTS, R.A.

Trial Piece of Buon Fresco, Victoria and Albert Museum.

parts may be left to dry in a little and get firmer before finally finishing these parts, when attention may now be directed to the painting of the hair, head-dress, or any small accessory. These portions of the work may be laid in at once with an almost flat tint of strong local colour, and the lights and shades modelled into it. On coming back to the flesh portions it may be found necessary to do a considerable amount of retouching ; this can still be done near the end of the day's work, as long as the touches are small and delicate, and provided there is no serious repainting attempted. As regards the general question of retouching a word of warning is necessary ; and that is, it often happens that some touches which are intended to dry out lighter than the colour on which they are superimposed will appear actually darker than the underneath colour when they are freshly laid on ; this generally happens when the colour which is being used contains some lime-white in its mixture, and it is owing to this capricious behaviour of opaque or semi-opaque tints that some artists have preferred to work almost entirely in transparent washes on the lime-white ground. It stands to reason, however, that the work will be more luminous and more permanent if the colours are all mixed in some degree with lime, and also there will be more complete incorporation or cohesion with the colours and the plaster ground.

It may be mentioned that if a general tone of

colour is to be given to any large surface, or if the same colour is to appear in different parts of the fresco, as in draperies, skies, buildings, etc., a few shades of the colours required should be mixed and preserved in closed jars for future use, as it is almost impossible to match shades of a colour with any degree of accuracy where lime is one of the ingredients of the mixture.

The simplest way to paint drapery in fresco is to first outline the work, and also indicate the principal folds in outline, then prepare three shades of the general colour so that the darkest or shadow tint will not be so dark as the final darkest shade, nor the lightest so light as the finished lights are intended to be. Paint in the shades and shadows first, the middle tints or half-tones next, and always finish with painting the lights; each tint, of course, in the operation must be lightly or delicately modelled into its neighbouring tint. This will constitute the first painting, and when finished it should be allowed to remain for ten minutes, or more, to sink properly into the plaster. For the second painting a darker shade than the darkest used in the first is prepared, and the darkest accents and depths of the folds are delicately expressed; and with a still lighter tint than the lights of the first painting, used in a fairly thick consistency, and with a full brush, the higher lights of the drapery are then painted in. The piece of work ought now to present the appearance of a monochrome study in

light and shade, but it may be necessary to indicate reflected lights in some portions of the shadows, and the lights may want a blush of some other colour to make the study a more truthful representation of drapery texture, or of the accidental lights, and also reflections from surrounding objects. These extra tints should be put in their proper places after the second painting is done; and care should be taken to mix them of a purer or brighter colour than they appear in the coloured sketch, so that, when they are glazed lightly over the work, the underpainting, which is of a different colour, will slightly show through and modify these bright glazings to the required tones. It may be necessary to glaze over more than once in order to get the desired effects, but that will not matter, provided that the glazing is done with a light hand, so that the underpainting is not disturbed.

When painting foliage, flowers, fruit, ornament, or architecture, the same method of working will also apply, but the treatment of such objects would be simpler, and will be found less difficult, than the painting of drapery.

We have gone somewhat into detail in giving this description as to the methods of painting in buon-fresco, but we have done so because we believe it to be the best and highest form of wall decoration, and we are convinced that if a dry wall is obtained, properly prepared, and none but the best and safest colours used, it is a perfectly possible

medium for wall decoration, even in this climate of ours.

As a proof of this we wish to mention that the fresco painted in this method, and with colours similar to what have been described as suitable for buon-fresco, by Sir Edward J. Poynter, P.R.A., in the chancel of St. Stephen's Church at Dulwich, about thirty-five years ago, is at the present moment in a perfectly sound condition, and is almost as fresh looking and bright as when first painted. It is exposed to the effects of condensed vapour and moisture in the winter months, when the church is heated, and it is subjected to the fumes of the gas that lights the church, yet it shows no signs of deterioration; on the contrary, the surface looks, and feels to the touch, more like terra-cotta, or of the texture and firmness of biscuit porcelain, than anything else one can think of.

When one hears of frescos perishing in this country, like some of those in the Houses of Parliament, we may be sure that the causes are not always due to the damp climate, nor altogether to sulphur gases, but either to a badly prepared wall surface, or, what is more than likely, the use of one or two doubtful colours, that in perishing will even loosen or destroy other sounder colours when juxtaposed to or mixed with them.

Photo. Bolas.] [*To face p.* 30.

PLATE 3.—ST. STEPHEN BEFORE HIS ACCUSERS, AND THE STONING OF ST. STEPHEN

Sir E. J. Poynter, Bart., P.R.A., Fresco in St. Stephen's Church, Dulwich

CHAPTER V

SPIRIT FRESCO PAINTING

THE method of painting followed out in the spirit-fresco system, as far as the manipulation of the colours is concerned, is almost precisely the same as that of the lime or buon-fresco process, the exception being, that the over-paintings and retouchings may be executed at any time, weeks, months, or even years, after any previous painting of the same parts; but as the preparation of the wall is of course somewhat different, and the medium is altogether so, a short description of the method or system may be of interest to students.

Spirit-fresco painting is a method or process invented by Mr. Gambier Parry of Gloucester, and which he adopted when painting his mural decorations in St. Andrew's Chapel in Gloucester Cathedral, and in Highnam church. The process was adopted by the late Lord Leighton for the wall paintings of "The Arts of Peace," and "War," in the Victoria and Albert Museum, and, many years previous to the painting of these works, for the fresco painted by him in Lyndhurst church in the

New Forest. Some of the frescos in the Manchester Town Hall, by Ford Madox Brown, are painted in this process, and some of the paintings by various modern artists which decorate the interior of the Royal Exchange are executed in the spirit-fresco medium on coarse canvas, and afterwards fastened to the wall.

Although we cannot claim for spirit-fresco that peculiar quality of monumental dignity, nor the undoubted luminosity or power of reflecting light that is characteristic of buon-fresco paintings, still, if the entire system is carefully carried out, from the preparation of the wall down to the finished painting, the work should be as lasting and as permanent as any other kind of wall painting.

For instance, the spirit-fresco executed by Lord Leighton in Lyndhurst church, forty-four years ago, had still retained its brilliancy of colour and was in a perfectly sound condition three years ago, when the writer last saw it. In the winter season water from the condensed moisture constantly runs down the surface of this fresco, but does not seem to injure it. No amount of damp or wet on the surface will injure spirit-fresco paintings, as the colours are practically locked up in wax, upon which water has little or no injurious effect, but if the wall is damp at the back, or water gets in by accident, the plaster ground behind becomes soft and friable, and the coloured surface is soon destroyed. Damp behind the surface is the greatest enemy to this kind of fresco,

[*To face p.* 32.

PLATE 9.—DETAIL FROM THE ARTS OF WAR FRESCO

Lord Leighton, Victoria and Albert Museum

and consequently the inner surface of an outside wall should not be chosen for an important work in this process.

As the writer had the honour of assisting Lord Leighton in the execution of the "Arts of Peace" and "War" frescos in the Victoria and Albert Museum, and also prepared both walls before the paintings were executed, he is therefore enabled to give a brief description, as outlined below, of the whole method of procedure, both as to the preparation of the walls and the method of painting adopted, which will serve to explain the system of spirit-fresco painting.

It may be mentioned that the walls were prepared in strict accordance with Mr. Gambier Parry's method and directions. Mr. Parry inspected this part of the work, and declared that the whole preparation had been done to his satisfaction.

First of all the rough brick surface of the wall had a coating of plaster, consisting of a mixture of lime and river sand, exactly of the same proportions, and laid on in the same thickness as that of the first plaster coating in buon-fresco. After this had remained for two years, a second coating, again similar in composition and in thickness to that used in the last-named process, was applied. This plaster coating was finished off with a rectangular wooden trowel, and, in the case of the wall on which the "Arts of War" fresco was painted, it was left with a fairly rough surface. The wall surface of

the "Arts of Peace" fresco was, on the contrary, brought to a much smoother face, as it was the desire of Lord Leighton to have a smooth surface for the latter painting, for working on the rough surface of the former fresco was, as he remarked, "like painting on a gravel walk."

When the coating of plaster, which was rather more than half-an-inch in thickness, had remained for about eight months, in order that it might get thoroughly dry, the wall was saturated with two coats of the "wall wash," this being made from the medium in which the spirit-fresco colours are ground, mixed with one and a half of its bulk of turpentine. The spirit-fresco medium is a mixture of pure white wax, gum elemi, oil of spike, and artists' copal; the proportions of each are given at end of this chapter. After the second coating of the wall wash had dried in, a day being allowed for this, a coating made of dry white lead, and half its quantity of gilders' whitening, thinned out with wall wash, was applied as thickly as it could be conveniently used. A little yellow ochre was added to this mixture in order to obtain a creamy white ground, which enables the artist to see by contrast the pure white lights that may be used in the painting, as the work proceeds.

The "Arts of War" fresco ground was treated with one coating only of this last mixture, which accounted for its extremely rough texture, while the "Arts of Peace" wall surface had three coatings, as

[*To face p.* 34.

PLATE 8.—DETAIL FROM THE ARTS OF WAR FRESCO

Lord Leighton, Victoria and Albert Museum

the nature of the subject was thought to demand a smoother surface.

The wall wash, preparation coats, and the colours used in the painting, being all mixed or diluted with the same medium, and the spike oil, used in the artist's dipper, having the effect of opening up the ground coating, allows the colours to unite with, or melt into, the ground, the latter being extremely porous, so that when finished and dry the work forms a continuous body from the surface right into the plaster. In this continuity of body spirit-fresco resembles closely that of the buon-fresco.

The process admits of repainting and retouching as often as may be necessary, though it is best, for the sake of gaining a desired luminous effect, to paint frankly with a full brush, laying on the colour in an impasto, and where depth of tone or transparency is desired these effects are best obtained by washing in thinly or glazing the shadows, using the colours and the spike oil medium, as in water-colour painting. The method of work is really, in the execution, a mixture of the techniques of oil and water-colour painting. One of its great advantages is the practically unlimited range of colours allowed on the palette, and another is that the artist can take up his work at any time, or stage, neither of which obtains in buon-fresco.

It may be of interest to describe the method of carrying out the painting of the work in connection with the South Kensington frescos. The original

designs were painted carefully in brown monochrome, in light and shade, and were enlarged as fine outlines on a canvas to the exact size of the wall space; from these enlargements tracings were made on tracing cloth, and these tracings were pricked through and pounced on to the wall with powdered charcoal, this impression being intensified by going over it with a lead pencil. A small coloured sketch in the case of each fresco was prepared in oil colour, which was fairly closely copied in the colouring of the larger work. For convenience, the monochrome cartoons in each case were photographed to full scale, in sections, and the light and shade was faithfully copied from these photographs, so that in the execution of the painting on the wall there should be no hesitation, nor any experimenting in colour.

The first piece of work done on the wall was one of the largest and most prominent figures, and was painted as far as possible in direct and full colour. The nature of the medium, however, does not always lend itself to the finishing of the work straight off in one painting; this is the case especially in the flesh tints, or in any elaborate drapery modelling. The method usually adopted was to lay in the tints with a full brush and solid colour, carrying the modelling as far as possible in the first painting. Too much working over the same part is liable to bring up the wax, and to cause the work to dry unpleasantly glossy. When there is a danger of this occurring it is better to leave off and take up the part again after

[*To face p.* 37.

PLATE 10.—DETAIL FROM THE ARTS OF PEACE

Lord Leighton, Victoria and Albert Museum

allowing a day or so for drying. When any part required a second or third painting, which usually happens, it was found best to begin by moistening the whole of it over with a very thin transparent tint of the local colour, using plenty of spike oil; this has the effect of opening up the wall surface by causing a slight melting of the paint underneath. The painting was then carried to a completer stage of finish by reinforcing the higher lights and deeper shadows. The process lends itself to the accomplishment of almost any degree of finish by the use of subsequent washes of thin colour in the shadows. It is better, as a matter of technique, in any kind of fresco painting to always employ the brush strokes in the direction of the lines of the form, and not across it, as is often done in oil painting; one reason for this is that the work can be accomplished more directly and rapidly, and another is that the drawing of the forms is better expressed.

It may be noticed that there is a marked difference in the technique of the painting of the two frescos in the museum. The "Arts of War," painted first, is treated broadly, and the colour throughout used rather thickly, while in the "Arts of Peace" a thinner method of treatment in the use of the colour is apparent, and the modelling in the latter, especially in the heads and nudes, is carried to a higher degree of finish, without any loss of breadth, by means of small brush strokes, or "hatching." This method of work is of special value in

fresco painting, and was adopted to a very great extent by the Italian frescanti of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Michael Angelo painted, or at least finished his frescos in the Sistine Chapel in hatched lines; Lord Leighton had satisfied himself on this point by a close examination of the Sistine frescos when he copied the figure of Adam from the "Creation of Man," which is painted in one of the ceiling panels of the chapel. The broader method of treatment, as seen in the technique of the "Arts of War" fresco, is the more popular, but Lord Leighton preferred the technique of his later work, the "Arts of Peace."

The following are the constituents of the medium in which the spirit fresco-colours are ground, according to Gambier Parry:—

Incorporated by heat.	Elemi resin (gum elemi) . .	2 ozs.	weight
	Pure white wax	4 ozs.	weight
	Oil of spike lavender . . .	8 ozs.	liquid measure
	Finest preparation of artist's copal	20 ozs.	liquid measure

The colours in a dry powder are ground up in this medium, and put into tubes for use. Spike oil to be used freely in the dipper, when painting.

Photo. Alinari.] [*To face p.* 39.

PLATE II.—THE BIRTH OF THE VIRGIN

Giotto, Cloister of Sta. Maria Novella, Florence

CHAPTER VI

TECHNICAL NOTES ON THE COMPOSITION, COLOUR, AND PRESENT STATE OF SOME ITALIAN FRESCOS

During a visit to Italy in the summer of last year the writer made some notes on the composition, colour, technique, and present state of some of the Italian frescos, which he hopes may interest the reader.

Among the frescos by Giotto (1276–1336) which still exist in Florence, perhaps the finest are those in the Bardi Chapel, in the Church of Santa Croce, where so many of the illustrious Florentines are laid at rest.

> "... here repose
> Angelo's, Alfieri's bones, and his,
> The starry Galileo, with his woes;
> Here Machiavelli's earth returned to whence it rose."

The three small frescos on the walls of the cloisters of the Church of Santa Maria Novella are of great interest to students, as they were painted by Giotto when his artistic powers were in full maturity, and are among the best examples of the master.

On the walls and ceiling of the Bardi Chapel, Giotto has painted a series of frescos illustrating scenes in the life and death of St. Francis of Assisi. On the right wall, beginning from the top, is the "Confirmation of the Rules of his Order by the Pope"; "St. Francis before the Sultan"; "Challenging the Magi to the Ordeal of Fire"; "St. Francis blessing Assisi"; and, his appearing to the Bishop of Assisi. On the left wall are the paintings, "St. Francis flees from his Father's House," and, his Death, where he is surrounded by his sorrowing confraternity. The latter fresco is the lowest one on the left, and is one of Giotto's best compositions, though it is not much more than a coloured outline, and has been much repainted. It is the only painting of the series in this chapel which has been noticed by Vasari in his life of Giotto. The figures in this fresco are painted almost in grisaille, with the exception of the cloak of the kneeling figure of the podesta, which is a deep red. The sky, which has been repainted, is a dark blue, in the centre of which appears the figure of the saint in a halo, surrounded, or supported by four angels on clouds. The colouring of this portion is in beautiful golden tints, and is evidently the untouched work of Giotto's hand. The background architecture is expressed in broken tints of a yellowish stone-colour. In spite of the repainting, the complete design and some of the original colouring and handling still remain. It is

Photo. Alinari.]

PLATE 12.—DEATH OF ST. FRANCIS

Giotto. Bardi Chapel, Sta. Croce, Florence

[*To face p.* 40.

one of the best of Giotto's didactic works, apart from the excellence of its design. The saint, sketched calmly in death ; the intense, yet dignified sorrow of some of his surrounding brethren ; and the eager examination by others of the marks of the stigmata, are well expressed in the attitudes and faces of the central groups of figures, while both sides of the painting are occupied by observant and stately figures, who look on the central scene where all the action is represented. This symmetrical kind of composition, produced by placing the more quiescent and choragic figures at either side of the picture, and the chief actors in the centre, was a favourite design of Giotto's, which he adopted in many of his great works—among others, for example, in "St. Francis fleeing from his Father's House," painted on the upper part of the left wall, and in the "Ordeal of Fire," on the centre of the opposite wall. It may be pointed out that many Italian artists subsequent to Giotto have also adopted this arrangement in their decorative compositions.

It is a moot question whether Giotto thought the illustration of the scene, or the story, or the correct balance and distribution of the units of his composition was the more important ; in any case, however, he invariably told his story well, no one could tell it better, while at the same time his compositions are undoubtedly consistent with the principles of good decoration.

In this chapel of the Bardi, on either side of the window, Giotto has painted life-size figures of St. Louis (King of France), St. Louis of Toulouse, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, and St. Claire. Each is standing under a painted niche of the Campanile-Gothic architecture. The "St. Louis of France" is the most interesting, and the finest figure of the series; and although considerably repainted, it has still much of Giotto's work left untouched, especially in the head and hexagonal pointed crown. It is a most dignified and serious rendering of the saintly king, as he stands in a firm and easy pose, Osiris-like, with his kingly attributes of sceptre and whip of authority in either hand.

The three small frescos by Giotto, painted on the walls of the cloisters, in the Church of Santa Maria Novella, at Florence. Two of these, the "Meeting of Joachim and Anna at the Golden Gate," and the "Birth of the Virgin," are on the recessed wall, on either side of the tomb of the Marchessa Strozzi-Ridolfi, and on the right of these two will be found the third, the "Presentation of the Virgin at the Temple." These small frescos measure each about 4 feet in width, and are shaped like quarters of a circle. From the technical point of view, the "Meeting of Joachim and Anna" is the most interesting, as it has suffered least of the three from repainting, and there are some fine passages of beautiful, though faded colour, and of frank and decisive brushwork, which is decidedly characteristic of the hand of

Photo. Alinari.] [*To face p.* 42.

PLATE 13.—ST. LOUIS, KING OF FRANCE

Giotto, Bardi Chapel, Sta. Croce, Florence

Photo. Alinari.] [*To face p.* 43.

PLATE 14.—MEETING OF SS. JOACHIM AND ANNA AT THE GOLDEN GATE

Giotto, Cloisters of Sta. Maria Novella, Florence

Giotto. Joachim is clothed in red drapery, the folds of which are very naturally arranged, and the technique of the painting of this garment reveals the swift and sure touch of the master. There is no hesitation in the execution of the brush-drawn folds, the colour is laid on thinly and transparently, so that the effect of the light ground is still apparent through the superimposed tints. Giotto painted his frescos, as far as one can make out, very thinly, and so aimed in getting a luminous and almost transparent effect, so we may safely come to the conclusion that when certain parts of his frescos look heavy and solid we may be sure that those parts have been repainted by some one else. St. Anna has blue drapery, and the figure next, on the left, has an orange cloak. The delightful little angel, repainted however, is of a yellow golden colour, and the sky has been repainted in a rather too dark blue colour; it is quite likely that the latter has been originally much lighter, and the angel deeper and warmer in tone. The architecture of the Golden Gate and the adjacent buildings, behind the figures, is painted in creamy white and pinkish tints. The two figures of the passing men with game are coloured in greys and pale reds, and afford good examples of the early Italian costume. The landscape of the background is very much faded to a neutral grey; it may have been clothed with flowers by Giotto, but the little tufts of vegetation which are now sprinkled over the hillside are evidently recent additions.

If we wish to see some of the best works in fresco that have been executed by Beato Fra Angelico (1387–1455), we must visit his old monastery of St. Mark's, now the Museum of St. Mark's, in Florence, and the best of all are the series of the small frescos painted by him between 1436 and 1445, on the walls of the cells, formerly occupied by the monks of this old monastery. In fourteen of the cells will be found the small frescos, one in each cell, each measuring about six feet in height, by about four in width. The remaining cells contain frescos painted by Fra Angelico's brother, Fra Benedetto, and the others by his pupils or assistants. The latter are very inferior in design and workmanship to those of the first-mentioned series.

In the first cell on the left is painted the scene at the Sepulchre, where "Christ appears to the Magdalen," the design and colour of which are extremely good. The robe on the figure of Christ is of a linen-white tone, with umberish shades; that of the Magdalen is of a yellowish pink colour; the hurdle fence which runs across the background of the picture is of a golden straw colour; trees, flowers and foliage are chiefly in tints of broken greens, and the rock work and entrance doorway to the tomb are in cool greys. In the fresco of the second cell, the "Deposition of Christ in the Sepulchre," the composing lines of the draperies and of the rocks flow harmoniously into, and also out of each other, the figures are so arranged as to form a decorative

Photo. Alinari.] [*To face p.* 44.

PLATE 15.—CHRIST APPEARING TO MARY MAGDALENE

Fra Angelico, Monastery of St. Mark, Florence

pattern-like effect, at the same time the intense fervour and piety of the subject is well expressed. The figure of the female saint at the feet of Christ has a red dress, the remainder of the lower figures have purple garments, and St. Dominic has the black and white dress of his order. The "Resurrection," painted in the eighth cell, has a colour arrangement of pale purples, greens, white, and dark blue, which is very harmonious. The colouring of the fresco in the last or inner cell on the right, the "Adoration of the Magi," though somewhat faded, is still very beautiful: the Virgin has a blue dress, and for the rest of the colouring, peach and plum, and golden tints prevail. The colour schemes of the frescos in the other cells, that have been painted by Fra Angelico, are similar to those of the first and second of the series, with the exception of the tenth, which has the entire background of the subject, the Presentation in the Temple, painted in a broken Venetian red colour, which can hardly have been the original colour.

The execution or technique of these small frescos by Angelico is exceedingly firm and direct; they are frankly painted, without any apparent hesitation of touch—indeed, in these paintings the student will find a more masterly freedom in the workmanship than in the case of the laboured and miniature-like paintings of the more popular altar-pieces and easel pictures of this master. These remarks apply to those of the cell frescos, which are the authentic

work of this master; and under this head would come more particularly the first, the third (the "Annunciation"), sixth (the "Transfiguration"), ninth ("Coronation of the Virgin"), and the "Adoration of the Magi," on the wall of an inner cell.

Two better-known works of Angelico are, the "Annunciation," on the wall of the upper corridor, facing the staircase, and his larger work, the lunette of the "Crucifixion" in the chapter-house of this monastery. The fresco of the "Annunciation," which has been considerably repainted, is very simple in composition, but very effective; and the colouring, though now dull and opaque, has still something reminiscent of Angelico's colour arrangements. The Virgin's dress is dark blue, with olive-green lining; the angel's dress is a pinkish dove-colour; the grass, foliage, and flowers are in grey greens and white; architecture, a light stone-colour; and the paling behind is a warm grey.

The great work of the "Crucifixion" in the chapter-house is in a fairly sound condition, but it has been much repainted. The colour treatment of the background is somewhat unusual, as it is marked out in three distinct and sharply divided bands of colour: the upper portion being of a dark purplish red (the original colour may have been a dark blue), the central horizontal band of a light vellum tint, and the lower, or ground colour, of a golden yellow. The painting of the figures in their present condition is

Photo. Alinari.]

PLATE 16.—THE DEPOSITION IN THE SEPULCHRE

Fra Angelico, Monastery of St. Mark

[*To face p.* 46.

Photo. Alinari.]

PLATE 17.—DETAIL OF THE CRUCIFIXION

Fra Angelico, Monastery of St. Mark, Florence

[*To face p.* 47.

most careful in execution : those on the right half, the Dominican fathers and brothers, and other founders of religious orders, are in the dark grey, white, and brown dresses of their orders, the balance of colour on this side being obtained by the bright red of the Cardinal's hat and of a book-cover, and the golden-coloured nimbi of the figures. A warmer scheme of colour is noticed on the left half of the painting, where golden tints, soft reds, grey greens, white, and grey complete an excellent harmony. The figure of Christ on the Cross is in very pale flesh tints, and has a white garment ; the flesh tints of the thieves on either side being darker in tone. The general effect of the colouring is very pure and luminous.

After Giotto, we may say, that the artist whose influence is most apparent in Italian art was the Florentine painter, Masaccio (1401–1428?). His most important works are the frescos he painted in the Brancacci Chapel of the Church of S. Maria del Carmine, at Florence. The instructor of Masaccio is supposed to have been Masolino da Panicale (1384–1435), who first painted some frescos in the above chapel, and who, according to Vasari, was commissioned to decorate the chapel with scenes from the history of St. Peter, some of which he had executed, but they are no longer in existence, unless we place to his credit the "Adam and Eve" fresco on the right wall, although some writers have ascribed this work to Filippino Lippi

1460-1505), the son of the painter Filippo Lippi, and a scholar of Botticelli.

There are really very few works left by Masaccio, but those which still are in existence clearly prove that he was far in advance of any artist of his time in his complete mastery of the human figure, as shown by his searching and accurate draughtsmanship, his great knowledge of anatomy, and his facility in giving spirit, action, and vitality to his decorative compositions. His gifts in these directions place him at the head of the greatest artists of the early half of the fifteenth century. His achievements are all the more wonderful if we believe, as it is said, that he died at the early age of twenty-six, though some authorities state that he reached the age of forty-one years. The finest authentic work from his hand is the fresco of "The Tribute Money," which he painted on the left wall of the Brancacci Chapel, and this work still remains as a monument to his great powers. This work is a picture which includes three scenes in its composition; namely, (1) The central group, where Christ rebukes St. Peter, around whom are the standing figures of the apostles, with varied expressions of indignation; the figure in the foreground, back view, in this group is that of the tax-collector, and the last figure of this central group, on the right, is a portrait of Masaccio. (2) The scene on the left, middle distance, represents St. Peter finding the money in the body of the fish, and (3) that on the

PLATE 18.

THE TRIBUTE MONEY.

Masaccio, Brancacci Chapel, S. Maria del Carmine, Florence.

THE TRIBUTE MONEY.

Masaccio, Brancacci Chapel, S. Maria del Carmine, Florence.

right is St. Peter giving the money to the tax-collector. The figures are all admirably drawn, and painted with great breadth of treatment; that of the back view of the tax-collector is more especially a remarkable example of accurate drawing and of easy freedom in the pose and action. The same person, but in front view, represented in the right scene, has a similar freedom of pose and action, and there is an intensely gratified expression in his face as he receives the tribute money. The natural treatment of the hilly landscape of the background is also far in advance of the landscape-painting of Masaccio's time.

On the altar wall there is another fresco by this painter, though now in a very bad state; the subject is "St. Peter baptizing," where, among other figures, is the celebrated nude figure of a benumbed and shivering youth, a figure so well drawn, and so correct in anatomy, that, as Lanzi says, "it has made an epoch in the history of art."

Another very fine and authentic work by Masaccio is the "Expulsion from Paradise," painted on the left wall of the chapel, where Adam and Eve are represented as being driven from the gates of Eden by the angel with the flaming sword. The figures in this intensely dramatic composition have been borrowed, with little alteration, by Raffaelle, and used in one of the Loggia frescos, and he has also adapted some other figures from the paintings in this chapel for the cartoons, and in his frescos of

the Stanze of the Vatican ; and yet he, to whom so many others were indebted, was, as Vasari tells us, "little esteemed in life." It was after his death that his real greatness was discovered ; for do we not read that the great artists of Italy and other countries came to study the work of Masaccio in that veritable school of art, the Brancacci Chapel of the Carmelite Church, and it was only then that he was truly honoured? Filippino Lippi founded his style on the work of Masaccio, and Ghirlandajo, Verocchio, Leonardo, Perugino, Raffaelle, and Michael Angelo acknowledged his greatness and learned of him. This painter who was, like many other great men, so little esteemed in life, had, after his death, this epitaph written on him—

> "I painted, and my picture was as life ;
> Spirit and movement to my forms I gave—
> I gave them soul and being. He who taught
> All others—Michael Angelo—I taught :
> He deigned to learn of me . . ."

Photo. Brogi.]

PLATE 19.—ANGELS. DETAIL FROM THE PARADISE

Benozzo Gozzoli, Riccardi Palace, Florence

[*To face p.* 51.

CHAPTER VII

FRESCO PAINTINGS BY GOZZOLI AND PERUGINO

Benozzo Gozzoli (1420–97), the most celebrated pupil of Fra Angelico, is seen at his best in his great decorative frescos which adorn the four walls of a room in the Riccardi Palace in Florence. This room, which had formerly been the Chapel of the Medici, has its walls completely painted over with the processional subject, the "Journey of the Magi," by Gozzoli, when he was about forty years old. It is one of the best, if not the best, preserved fresco paintings in Florence. The colouring is very rich and warm in glowing tones, as in the case of all Gozzoli's work which has remained uninjured. The extremely rich effect is considerably heightened by the free use of gold on the embroideries of the principal figures, and on the horse-trappings. The work contains many portraits of the principal people of the time, among which are those of Cosimo de Medici, Lorenzo the Magnificent, and that of the artist himself. The kings, in sumptuous apparel, are represented on horseback, attended by lords, squires, retainers and

servants, all travelling slowly and with much solemnity, through a beautiful country. A hunting party occupies the left wall, looking towards the window, where some leopards and hawks, used for hunting, are admirably drawn and painted. On the recessed wall surrounding the window the scene represented is Paradise, or the Garden of Heaven, in which many angels are in prayer, and others soaring in the clouds. The fine condition of these frescos presents a great contrast to the decayed and almost obliterated paintings executed by Gozzoli on the walls of the Campo Santa at Pisa. Very little, indeed, except slight traces, now remains of the latter paintings, but the cause of their decay is not far to seek. It is true that all the paintings on the walls of the Campo Santa have always been exposed to the open air, but the real cause of the disintegration of the Gozzoli paintings in this place is from their being painted in tempera, or fresco-secco, and not, as in the case of the Riccardi frescos, in veritable or buon-fresco. The Campo Santa frescos by Gozzoli represent scenes from the history of the Old Testament, from the time of Noah to the Queen of Sheba's visit to King Solomon. They were painted between 1469 and 1485, when the artist was in the zenith of his powers, and from what remains of them we can easily imagine them to have been the finest of any works executed by this great nature-loving artist. An Italian artist who was engaged in repairing the more decayed

Photo. Brogi.]

PLATE 20.—ANGELS. DETAIL FROM THE PARADISE

Benozzo Gozzoli, Riccardi Palace, Florence

[*To face p.* 53.

portions of Gozzoli's wall paintings in the Campo Santa, in the summer of 1908, informed the writer that nearly all the remaining colours on these paintings were in a powdery state on the surface of the wall, and could easily be dusted off. This rarely happens in the case of paintings which have been executed in buon or veritable fresco, and there is doubt that the chief cause of decay and of the faded appearance of many of the old Italian frescos is due to the fact that they were either executed in tempera, or in the fresco-secco method, or that they were begun in buon-fresco and finished afterwards with glazings and opaque touches of tempera colour. Many of Simon Memmi's frescos in the Spanish Chapel, in the Church of Santa Maria Novella at Florence, were repainted or "restored" about one hundred years after his death, and Ruskin has stated that some of the restorer's over-painting has since fallen away, revealing the very pure original work underneath.

Pietro Vanucci, better known as Pietro Perugino (1446–1524), was one of the most important artists of the Umbrian school of painting, and was Raffaelle's early instructor. He painted many frescos in Florence, where he lived and worked for about fourteen years, and where he acquired much of the Florentine manner of design and painting. One of his most important works in Florence is the great fresco of the "Crucifixion," with saints standing around the foot of the cross, which

he painted in three compartments on the wall of the chapter-house of the Church of St. Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi, in the Via Colona. The design and pose of the figures in this fresco are very characteristic of Perugino's manner, which may be seen in the upcast and wistful expression of the eyes, the pose of the heads, and devout attitudes of his standing figures. The illustrations of the two heads from this fresco, here given, are in the above respects very typical of Perugino's work; they also admirably show his method of handling, as well as the brush-marks of the fresco. The light touches in the beard and hair of the male head are later reinforcements, but with this exception, the whole of the painting in these heads is quite likely to be the genuine work of Perugino. Another fresco in Florence, known as the "Cenacolo di Foligno," is ascribed to Perugino; it is in the refectory of the old convent of St. Onofrio, in the Via Faenza.

This artist painted some important frescos in the Sistine Chapel of the Vatican, at Rome, some of which are still in existence, namely, the "Baptism of Christ," and the "Delivery of the Keys to St. Peter." It is recorded that he had also painted a fresco on the wall at the back of the altar in this chapel, but that it was destroyed in order to make way for Michael Angelo's "Last Judgment." In those palmy days of great artistic activity it was evident that some difficulty was experienced in finding sufficient wall space on which the painters of

Photo. Alinari.]

PLATE 21.—ST. BENEDICT, FROM THE CRUCIFIXION

Perugino, Church of Sta. Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi

[*To face p.* 54.

Photo. Alinari.]

PLATE 22.—ST. JOHN, FROM THE CRUCIFIXION.

Perugino, Church of Sta. Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi

[*To face p.* 55.

that time might execute their numerous commissions, when, as we see, masterpieces had to be destroyed to make room for still greater works. If we contrast those spacious days of art with those of our own time and in our own country, it affords us food for some reflection of a mournful kind to find there are acres of blank spaces on the walls of our churches and public buildings, and capable enough artists in our midst who might be employed to decorate these barren spaces, but nobody, or no Government, public-spirited enough to entrust modern artists with commissions to execute such works.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WORK OF PINTURICCHIO AND GHIRLANDAJO

Bernardino Pinturicchio of Perugia (1454–1513) was an excellent painter in fresco, although Vasari, in his *Lives of the Painters*, has done scant justice to his great merits. In the face of much splendid work that has been done by Pinturicchio, the want of appreciation of his merits by Vasari is quite inexplicable. Any one who has seen, and carefully examined his frescos in the Borgia apartments of the Vatican must acknowledge him as one of the greatest decorative artists of his time, greater, for example because less conventional, than Perugino, his contemporary, with whom he sometimes collaborated, and who often got credit for work which was done by Pinturicchio. To compare his work with that of Perugino we should say that in the design and colouring of the former artist there is more life, more spontaneity, and much less mannerism than is seen in the work of Perugino. In design his wall decorations are characterized by great variety and plenitude of incident, and although he may appear at times to aim at the expression of too

Photo. Alinari.] [*To face p.* 56.

PLATE 23.—DETAIL FROM CHRIST'S CHARGE TO PETER

Perugino, Sistine Chapel

Photo. Anderson.]

PLATE 24.—ST. CATHERINE DISPUTING BEFORE THE EMPEROR MAXIMIANUS

Pinturicchio, Borgia Appartments, Vatican, Rome

[*To face p.* 57.

much individuality in the figures of his groups, the outcome perhaps of his great versatility, yet in a masterly way he invariably succeeds in uniting the various and contrasting elements of his work into one harmonious arrangement, the unity being largely assisted by the judicious disposition of his colour, which, generally speaking, is a harmony of azure and gold. Pinturicchio has been adversely criticised for his practice of giving undue prominence to some of the mouldings and other salient points of the painted architecture in his frescos, and the patterns of embroidery on the dresses of his figures, by modelling them in low relief and afterwards gilding them, the objection being that such a practice is not the function of painting; that may be, but surely an artist may be allowed to treat his subject in his own way, by using any means to produce the desired end he may have in view, especially if that end is to produce a beautiful work in harmony with its surroundings. Artistic heresies may be illogical enough, but it matters very little if the result is a production of beauty, for do we not often see that some dreadfully logical people only succeed in producing the ugliness of the commonplace however careful they may be in the due observance of artistic laws?

In the vaulted ceiling panels and on the groined ribs of the vaults in the Borgia apartments there is a good deal of stucco relief modelling of ornament and animal forms by Giovanni da Udine and Perina

del Vaga, this relief decoration being coloured and gilded, similar to the cameo reliefs in the loggia of the Vatican, which the two last-named artists had executed under Raffaelle's direction; and as Pinturicchio's frescos were in all probability painted before the date of the ceiling decorations, it is not at all unlikely that the relief work on the wall frescos underneath suggested in a great measure a similar enrichment of the vaulted ribs and ceilings. In any case the whole of the decorations on both walls and ceilings of the Borgia apartments are in singular harmony and unity, although the work has been done by different hands.

Pinturicchio was employed by the Pope, Alexander VI, to decorate the Borgia apartments; accordingly, the frescos of the second, third, and fourth rooms were painted by him, with scenes from the life of Christ, the lives of the Saints, and with allegorical representations of the arts and sciences respectively. The most important and largest fresco has the subject of St. Catherine of Alexandria disputing before the Emperor Maximianus, in the background of which is a representation of the Arch of Constantine. This is painted on the back wall of the third room. The figure of St. Catherine is finely designed and painted, and is supposed to be a portrait of Lucretia Borgia. (See illustrations.) Among the best work of Pinturicchio are his frescos in the first chapel to the right in the Church of S. Maria Araceli, Rome, representing scenes from

Photo. Anderson.] [*To face p.* 58.

PLATE 25.—PORTRAIT OF LUCREZIA BORGIA. ST. CATHERINE DISPUTING BEFORE THE EMPEROR. DETAIL OF FRESCO

Pinturicchio, Borgia Appartments, Vatican

[*To face p.* 59.

PLATE 26.—THE NATIVITY

Pinturicchio, Church of Sta. Maria del Popolo, Rome

the life of St. Bernard of Siena, and on the vaulted roof is painted the four Evangelists, all of which are very vigorous and lifelike representations; the same may also be said of his frescos in the Baglioni Chapel in the Duomo at Spello. His two frescos in the Sistine Chapel, "Moses journeying to Egypt" and the "Baptism of Christ," were formerly ascribed to Perugino.

The Florentine artist, Domenico Ghirlandajo (1449–1498), was one of the most eminent fresco painters of his time. He was fond of introducing sumptuously dressed personages into his works, many of whom were representations of the people of his day. The powerful Tornabuoni family of Florence were his patrons, who commissioned him to paint many frescos in Florence and in Rome. He can claim the distinction of having Michael Angelo as one of his pupils.

Some of his best existing works are those in the choir of the Church of Santa Maria Novella, and the Church of St. Trinita at Florence. In the Church of Santa Maria degli Innocenti, in the Foundling Hospital at Florence, is a well-preserved altar-piece, a tempera painting on panel by him, the "Adoration of the Magi," which is dignified in its design, and the colouring is brilliant in reds and golden hues, these colours being very characteristic of his later works. In the background of this fine work is a beautiful landscape, and at the foot of the hill on the left is the scene representing the

slaughter of the Innocents. The drapery of the kneeling king is masterly in the design of its folds, but the standing figure of the youthful king on the left is the most beautiful of the larger figures. In all the range of Italian art it would be difficult to match for beauty and for types of innocence the two little babes, or *innocenti*, who are kneeling at the bottom of the picture, adoring and adorable, as in every way they are. At the top, kneeling on clouds above the manger, are four lovely angels holding a scroll, on which is written, " Gloria in excelsis Deo." Generally speaking, his frescos are remarkable for their high degree of careful finish, and nearly all of the spectators or accessory figures in his paintings are portraits of his patrons and contemporaries. His compositions are very simple and dignified, with a certain degree of solemn severity in the drawing of the principal figures. The latter characteristic is partly due to his practice of making many of his figures stately portraits, and partly to the long and straight folds of his draperies, which remind us of Masaccio's work, and, in a lesser degree, that of Giotto. It is interesting to compose and note the similarity of design which is apparent in his fresco, the " Calling of SS. Peter and Andrew," in the Sistine Chapel, with the " Tribute Money," by Masaccio, in the Brancacci Chapel of the Carmelite Church at Florence ; and also his celebrated work, the " Death of St. Francis," in St. Trinita at Florence, with the same subject painted by Giotto

Photo. Alinari.] [*To face p.* 60.

PLATE 27.—FLORENTINE LADY. DETAIL OF FRESCO, BIRTH OF ST. JOHN

Ghirlandajo, Church of Sta. Maria Novella, Florence

[*To face p.* 61.

PLATE 28.—DEATH OF ST. FRANCIS

Ghirlandajo, Church of St. Trinita, Florence

in the Bardi Chapel of Santa Croce. In the latter work we see piety and sentiment more strongly expressed by Giotto, while portraiture and light and shade are more in evidence in Ghirlandajo's rendering of this subject, but the figure composition in both works is almost identical.

The frescos by Ghirlandajo in the choir of the Church of Santa Maria Novella are among the most important of his works, and remain as fine examples of his skill as a great decorator. The subjects are from the life of the Virgin and John the Baptist, all of which are treated with great care and elaboration of rich detail, the utmost finish being not only accorded to the principal actors in the scenes, but also to the architectural backgrounds, with their panels and friezes of figures, the embroidered patterns on the dresses, and other decorative accessories, in fact all his beauties of style in design, execution, and colouring are admirably expressed in these characteristic works.

In the Monastery of San Marco in Florence, in the smaller refectory, is an interesting fresco of the "Cenacolo," or Last Supper, by Ghirlandajo. There is a little stiffness and formality in the composition of this work, but the heads of the principal figures are lifelike and well painted. The colouring is strong and rich, gold has been freely used in the nimbi and on the dresses of the figures, and in the background. Above the figures, in the background, is painted an abundance of cypress, orange trees, and flowers;

while in the sky, hawks are pursuing wild duck. There is also a similar, but in some ways a much better, "Cenacolo" by Ghirlandajo in the refectory in the convent of the Church of the Ognissanti at Florence.

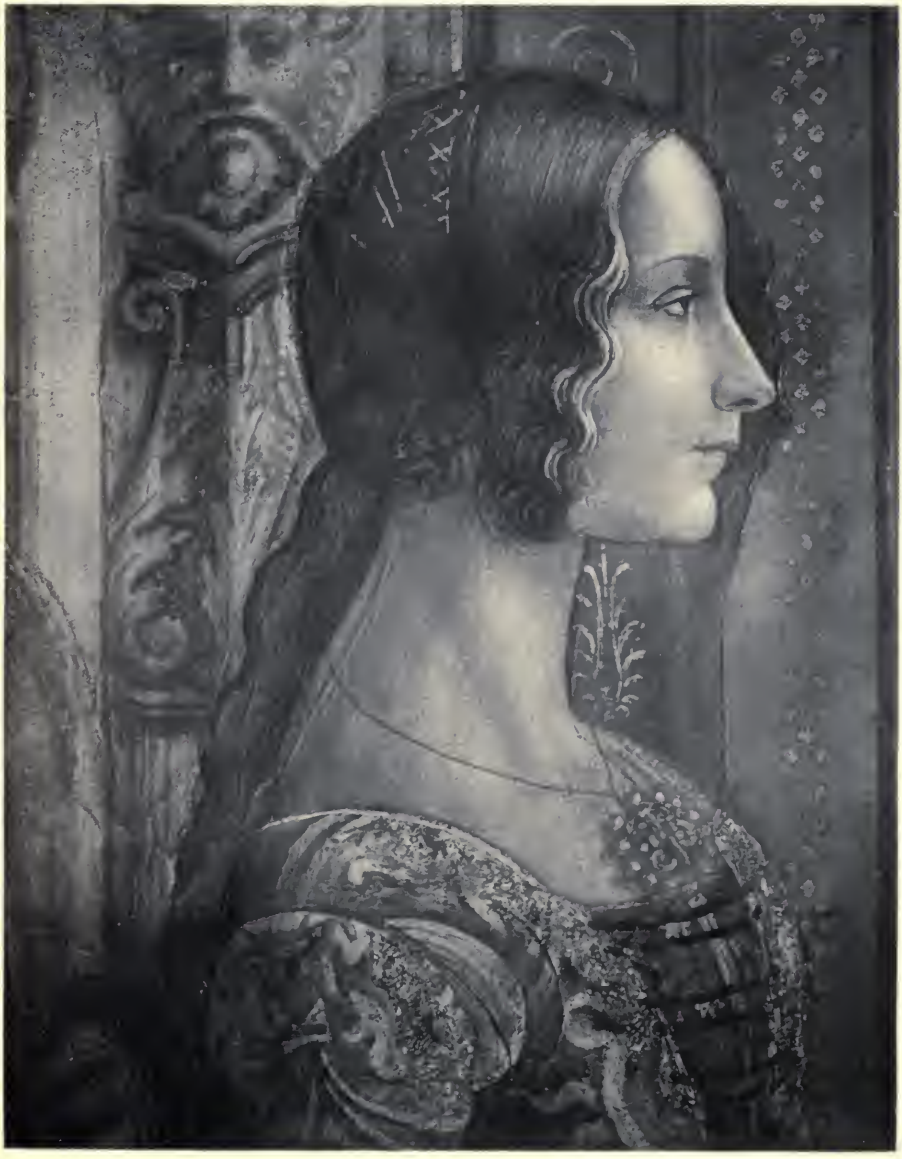


Photo. Alinari.] [*To face p.* 62.

PLATE 29.—FLORENTINE LADY. DETAIL OF FRESCO, BIRTH OF THE VIRGIN

Ghirlandajo, Church of Sta. Maria Novella, Florence

Photo. Alinari.]

PLATE 30.—DETAIL FROM FRESCO, BIRTH OF THE VIRGIN

Ghirlandajo, Church of Sta. Maria Novella, Florence

[*To face p.* 63.

CHAPTER IX

FRESCOS BY ANDREA DEL SARTO, LUINI, G. FERRARI, RAFFAELLE AND MICHAEL ANGELO

In the anterior court of the Church of the Santissima Annunziata, in Florence, there are five fairly well-preserved frescos by Andrea del Sarto (1488–1530). In the same court there are others painted by his pupils, and contemporary artists. The best of the five by Andrea is the "Death of St. Filippo," where a young man is raised to life by the dead body of the saint. The colouring is very strong and luminous, and has the soft melting character of the various tones into each other, which distinguishes the work of this painter, more especially seen in his easel pictures. The next fresco in importance of this series is that which represents the miracles wrought by the robes of St. Filippo, where children are healed by touching his garments. The colouring of this painting is lively and fresh, and the effect of light and shade is a very important feature in the work. The backgrounds of these frescos, whether architectural or landscape, are at present exceedingly light in tone, which either

means that these parts have faded or have been destroyed by cleaning. This causes the figures to look completely out of tone with the pale backgrounds.

The Brera Palace at Milan contains a great number of small and extremely interesting frescos, that have been removed from various churches and suppressed convents in the city and neighbourhood, among which are some very good examples of Bernardino Luini's work (1470–1530 ?). Luini was the most famous scholar of Leonardo da Vinci, and was so greatly influenced by the latter that many pictures had for a long time been ascribed to his master. He was a most prolific and industrious artist, both in fresco and in easel pictures, and as a rule his work is full of grace and charm. The female figures and children painted by Luini are always characterized by their easy natural poses, and have a refined delicacy and sweetness of expression. His colouring, always rich and warm in tone, is chiefly distinguished by its freshness and purity; these qualities are best seen in his smaller frescos, now in the Brera galleries. In the entrance corridor there is an example of his fresco work, brought from the Church of St. Maria di Brera, in Milan. The subject is the "Virgin and Child," with an angel and two other figures, St. Abate, and St. Barbara, and a boy with a lute. The colour and drawing of this example are extremely good, though the general composition is lacking in cohe-

Photo. Alinari.] [*To face p.* 64.

PLATE 31.—FRESCO, INFANT ANGEL

Luini, Brera, Milan

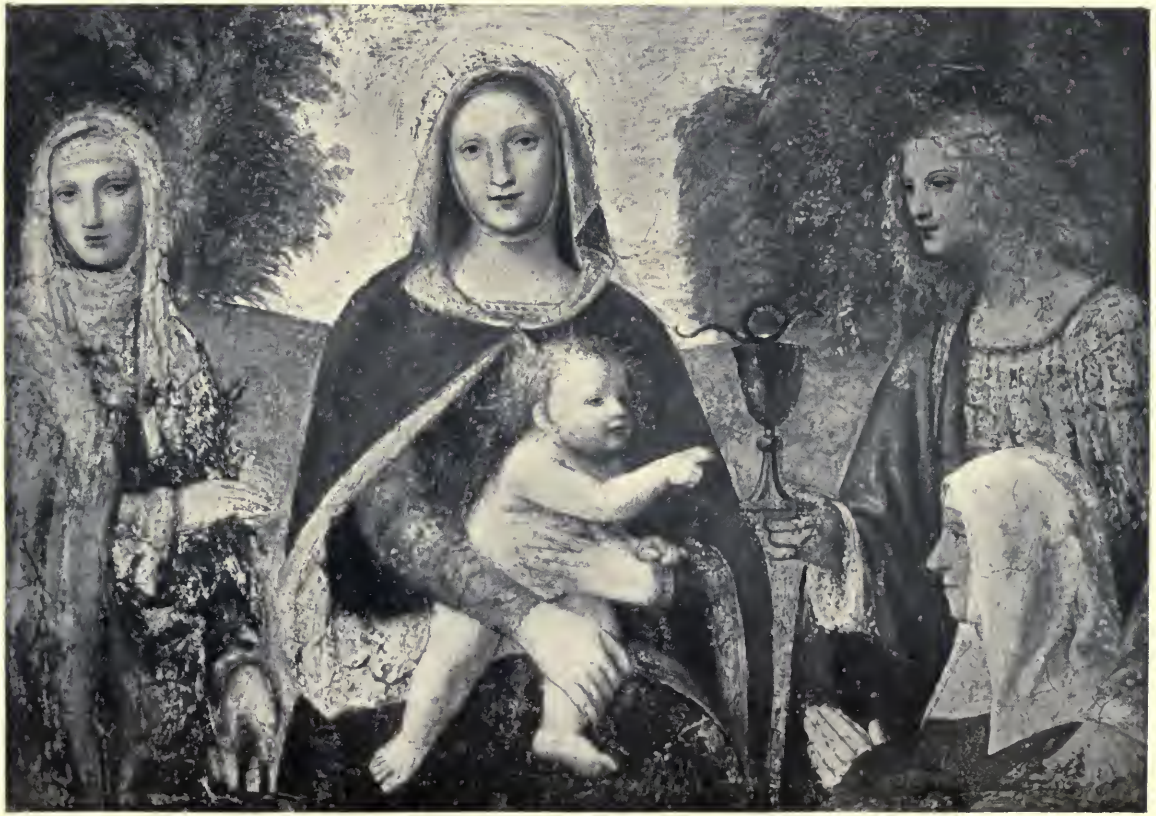


Photo. Alinari.]

PLATE 32.—THE VIRGIN AND CHILD WITH ST. JOHN AND ST. MARTHA

Luini, Fresco in the Brera, Milan

[*To face p.* 65.

sion and unity. The "Burial of St. Catherine" is also in the Brera. It is a small fresco brought from the Convent della Pelucca, and is one of the more successful works of Luini. Three finely designed angels are carrying the body of St. Catherine, below which is the tomb. The robes of the saint are red in colour, while those of the angel on the right are purple; the middle, green; and the angel to the left has yellow drapery. The best work, however, by Luini in the Brera is the beautiful fresco, in the Sala XVI, of the "Virgin and Child" with St. Martha, St. John, and a nun. In this work the landscape background is remarkably fresh and pure in colour, and is painted in a very naturalistic manner, the treatment of the trees, and details of the landscape reminding one forcibly of a picture by Constable. There are some fine passages of luminous and harmonious colouring in the draperies, the faces of the figures have a tenderness and purity of expression, and the whole work is a convincing example of the master at his best. Being on a level with the eye, and in a good light, one is enabled to see in this fresco that Luini's method of painting consisted in his first modelling the forms in a solid impasto, and afterwards finishing his work, like the majority of Italian fresco painters, by shading transparently in finely hatched lines.

There are other examples of Luini's fresco work in the Brera, consisting chiefly of heads and figures of boys. In the old Romanesque basilica church

of St. Ambrogio at Milan, in the first chapel of the left aisle, is a fresco by him, the "Ecce Homo," in a fairly good state of preservation, and in the sixth chapel of the right aisle is his work, the "Legend of St. George." The Church of St. Maria della Grazie in the same city contains his fresco of the "Virgin Enthroned," with saints around, the colour and composition of which are good, but an injurious dusty bloom has appeared on some portions of this fine work. Numerous examples of Luini's fresco decorations may be seen in the Church of St. Maurizo (Monastero Maggiore), including the large "Crucifixion," on the wall over the entrance to the choir. This great work contains nearly 140 figures, many of which are of singular beauty. At Saronno, not far from Milan, in the Church of the Santuario there are also some very important frescos by Luini, representing scenes in the history of the Virgin, the best of which is a very fine "Adoration of the Magi."

Gaudenzio Ferrari (1484–1549) was another Milanese painter, though a native of Piedmont, but Milan and its neighbourhood was strictly speaking the centre of his labours. He was a follower of Leonardo da Vinci, although he had worked with Perugino, and later with Raffaelle. He painted numerous frescos in Milan, Saronno, and Varallo; most of them are characterized by life and animation of pose in the figures, and as a rule his works contain many figures of great merit and beauty,

[*To face p.* 66.

PLATE 33.—ST. LUCY SENTENCED TO DEATH

Jacopo D'Avanzo, Church of St. Anthony, Padua

showing fine qualities of freedom in the execution. But his work as a whole is unequal, owing to his tendency of allowing himself to be influenced by that of his contemporaries. The best of his frescos are those which are most Luinesque in style and character.

In the side entrance of the right aisle, in the Church of St. Ambrogio, in Milan, Ferrari has painted the frescos, "Christ bearing the Cross," and the "Three Marys"; the latter, though darkened much, is in a good state of preservation, and is now under glass. At Saronno, in the Church of the Santuario, he has decorated the cupola with an assemblage of angels and winged boys, some of which are designed with great spirit, and are beautifully painted. Later work by Ferrari is the fresco decoration of the fourth chapel in the right aisle of St. Maria delle Grazie (1542), where he painted the powerful compositions of the Passion, namely, the "Crucifixion," the "Scourging of Christ," and "Christ Crowned with Thorns." The figures are life-size, and are characterized by much animation, strong colouring, and great freedom of execution.

The works of Raffaelle and Michael Angelo in fresco painting which adorn the Stanze of the Vatican and the Sistine Chapel, respectively, have been so much described, and are so well known to students, that any criticism which might be offered here would amount to an unstinted appreciation of their labours. It goes without saying that it is a

very serious thing for the sake of Italian Art that so much of the finest work of these masters has either gone very dark and dirty, or, what is worse, has in places almost perished by the disintegration of the colours. The large fresco of the "School of Athens," in the Stanze of the Vatican, probably the best work in fresco from the hand of Raffaelle, is now quite different from what it must have been when first it was painted. The composition of the figures and some portions of the orginal colours still remain, but all else must be entirely changed. Even where the original colour is still on the wall, such parts are extremely blackened by age and dirt, but the architectural background, the central flight of steps, and the foreground around and between the figures are, on the contrary, much lighter in tone than they must have been originally, and consequently all the shade and shadows, which formerly connected the masses of the figure groups together, have disappeared. The present extreme lightness of tone which surrounds the dark figures, unduly emphasizes the latter, and gives an unsatisfactory and very spotty appearance to the general composition, which is at variance with the early engravings and copies of this fresco. It is quite likely that the present aspect of this great work is due to the fact that the cleaners and restorers engaged on it from time to time have employed their cleansing energy on the background more than on the figures, and have cleaned off the dirt,

Photo. Anderson.]

PLATE 34.—THE FIRE IN THE BORGO

Raffaelle, Stanza dell'Incendio, Vatican, Rome

[*To face p.* 58.

Photo. Braun, Clément et Cie.]

PLATE 35.—FIGURE OF ADAM, FROM THE CREATION OF MAN

Michael Angelo, Sistine Chapel, Vatican, Rome

[*To face p.* 69.

and paint as well, so leaving this portion in a clean-looking or light state; and if we bear in mind that the background work has in all probability been painted much more thinly, or with less impasto, than the figures, we can easily imagine that in the parts under notice there has always been less body of colour to be destroyed by the cleaners. It is also noticeable that where a blue or grey colour has been used in the draperies, the painting of such parts has badly perished, which suggests that either a vegetable or a copper-blue pigment has been used, instead of a cobalt or an ultramarine blue, or that these parts have been afterwards repainted in tempera. The other frescos in this room, the "Mount Parnassus," and the "Prudence, Fortitude and Temperance," are in a much better state than the "School of Athens."

Michael Angelo's great work in fresco, on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, is still, fortunately, in a fairly good state, but the "Last Judgment," on the altar wall, is very grimy, and in a much blackened state. One cannot help thinking that a good deal of the dirt could be removed from this work by a little judicious cleaning.

THE END

INDEX

Andrea del Sarto, 63–64
Architecture, 1
Architecture, principles of, 6
Arts of Peace fresco, 34
Arts of War fresco, 33–34

Bardi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence, 39–40
Benozzo Gozzoli, 51–53
Borgia apartments, Vatican, 56–58
Brancacci Chapel, Carmelite Church, 47–49
Brera Palace, Milan, frescos at, 64–65
Brown, Ford Madox, 32
Brushes for fresco, 20
Buon-fresco, 9

Campo Santa, Pisa, 52
Cartoons, 16, 17, 24, 56
Cenacolo by Ghirlandajo, 61–62
Cnossus, 10
Colour sketches, 16, 36
Colours for buon-fresco, 17–19

Design in objects of general utility, 5
Drapery painting, 28–29

Egyptian tempera, 11
Encaustic painting, 9

Filippino Lippi, 47
Flesh painting, 25–27
Foundling Hospital, Florence, 59–60
Fra Angelico, 44–46
Fresco-buono, 12
Fresco-secco, 8, 11
Fresco, systems and methods, 8

Gaudenzio Ferrari, 66–67
Ghirlandajo, Domenico, 59–61
Giotto, 39–43
Giovanni da Udine, 57–58
Gloucester Cathedral, 31

Houses of Parliament frescos, 30

Intonaco, 15

Keim's process, 9

Last Judgment fresco, 68
Leighton, Lord, 32–33
Luini, Bernardino, 64–66
Lyndhurst Church fresco, 32

Masaccio, 47–49
Masolino da Panicale, 47
Method of execution in buon-fresco, 23
Method of execution in spirit fresco, 36–37
Michael Angelo, 38, 50, 54, 68
Monastery of St. Mark frescos, 44–46, 61
Monumental painting, essentials of, 4
Mosaics, 3
Mycene, 10

Painting, 2
Parry, Gambier, 53
Perina del Vaga, 57–58
Perugino, 53–55
Pinturicchio, 56–58
Pompeii, 11
Poynter, Sir E. J., Bart., P.R.A., 16, 30

Raffaelle, 49, 67, 69
Retouching, 27
Riccardi palace, 51

Ruskin, 53

Santa Maria della Grazie, Milan, 66–67
Santa Maria Maddalena de Pazzi, 54
Santa Maria Novella, Florence, 39, 61
Santissima Annunziata, Church of the, 63
St. Ambrogio, Milan, 66–67
St. Catherine of Alexandria, 58
St. Maurizo Church (Monastero Maggiore), 66
St. Stephen's, Dulwich, 71
Saronno, Church of the Santurario, 66–67
School of Athens fresco, 68
Simon Memmi, 53
Sistine Chapel, 38, 54, 59
Spanish Chapel, 53
Spirit fresco, 31
Spirit fresco medium, 38
Spirit fresco painting, 9

Tempera painting, 9
Test brick for colour, 22
Thera, 10
Tiryns, 10

Undercoating, or ground tint, 21

Vasari, 40, 50, 56
Vatican, Loggia of the, 58
Victoria and Albert Museum, 33

Walls for fresco paintings, 14, 33
Walls, preparation of, 14, 33–34
Water-glass fresco, 9

Richard Clay & Sons, Limited, London and Bungay.